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The social and political background to car-free Noorderplantsoen - Traffic planning in Groningen in the 1980's (3).

Tsubohara, S.

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1. Introduction

After the Plan Traffic and Transport was decided in 1982, traffic planning for the northern neighbourhoods (Vinkhuizen, Paddepoel and Selwerd) was integrated into the process of making the Plan Intermediate Step (*Nota Tussenstap*) for "Groningen-north", which included not only the northern neighbourhoods but also Korrewegwijk and the area around Noorderplantsoen. In this Groningen-north in those days, there were many issues related to traffic planning. Among others, closing Noorderplantsoen to cars had been an important assignment for the PvdA of Groningen since the 1970s. The idea of excluding cars from this park, which was built on the site of the castle wall in the 19th century and is situated to the north of the inner city, originated from residents of Noorderplantsoenbuurt. They put forward this idea in the process of the neighbourhood restoration project early in the 1970s. The PvdA integrated this idea into its traffic policy, and its election program, Municipal Programme 78-82, stated that "As soon as the ring roads are completed, Noorderplantsoen must be closed to through car traffic"¹. The Municipal Program 82-86, succeeding the principles of traffic planning of the party, argued more concretely for closing the park, together with other measures for Groningen-north:

3.5. Traffic and transport

PRINCIPLES

(...)

The following principles are central in our traffic policy:

- restraining travelling demand by the private car;
- making residential neighbourhoods traffic-limited and improving residential environment;
- stimulating public transport: train, urban- and regional bus and the taxi;
- stimulating slow traffic: walking and cycling;
- increasing traffic safety; through regarding the protection of pedestrians and cyclists in relation to motorised traffic as a principle in every traffic measure taken. In this respect, attention is particularly given to the most vulnerable groups: children, the elderly and the handicapped.

PROGRAM

(...)

6. After the northern ring road is completed, Leliesingel through Noorderplantsoen will be closed to car traffic; for the neighbourhoods around the park, measures have to be taken in order to prevent through traffic.

7. For the neighbourhoods Paddepoel and Selwerd, a traffic plan is made after consultation with residents, and implemented. The objective: keeping out through traffic from these neighbourhoods after the northern ring road comes into service.

8. After the eastern ring road comes into service, through traffic on Sumatrалаan - Kapteynlaan will be excluded.²

Although the Plan Intermediate Step was decided by the municipal council in 1986, the issue concerning Noorderplantsoen dragged on until it was definitively closed to cars in 1994 after the first local referendum in Groningen.

This paper will analyse the planning process of traffic plans for the northern neighbourhoods and Groningen-north, and the succeeding process that led to closing

Noorderplantsoen to cars, in terms of the social and political background, particularly paying attention to the party framework of the PvdA, like the preceding two papers³. Through this work, this paper will try to understand the decisive factor in closing the park. The reason that the issue concerning Noorderplantsoen is dealt with as a part of traffic planning in the 1980s is that this decisive factor lies, as seen later, in the 1980s. The research is mainly based on investigating written materials, including the local newspapers, Nieuwsblad van het Noorden and Groninger Gezinsbode, and the minutes of the municipal council. The author interviewed some PvdA members who were involved in planning in the 1970s and 80s.

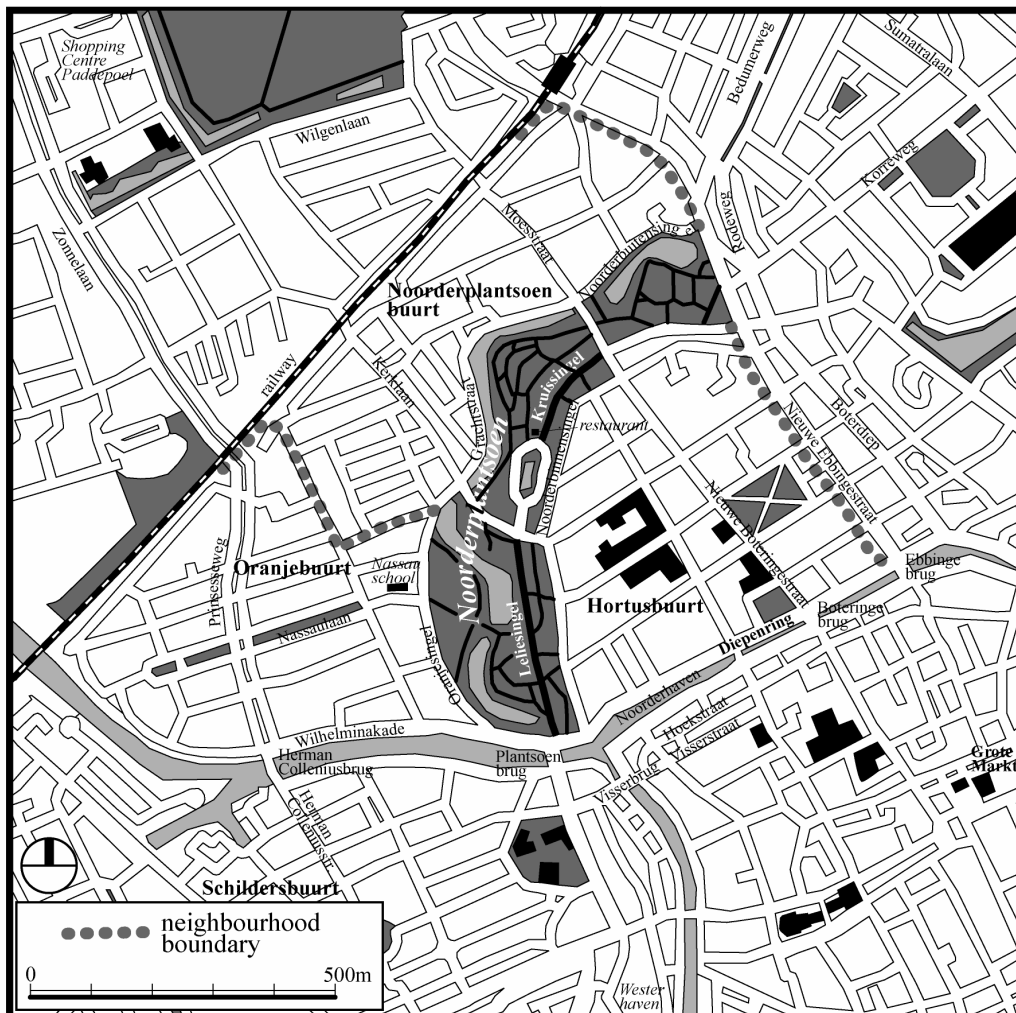


Figure 1: Noorderplantsoen and its environs

2. The Traffic Plan Northern Neighbourhoods

2.1 five models

In October 1978, the municipal council of Groningen approved the budget for traffic planning for the northern neighbourhoods, under strong opposition particularly from shopkeepers of the Shopping Centre Paddepoel⁴. At this council meeting, *wethouder* of traffic Jacques Wallage (PvdA) promised a "good participation"⁵. Although this planning had to be completed well before the northern ring road came into service, it suffered a repeated lag.

The Discussion Plan Traffic and Transport, which was for the whole city area and published by the B&W in June 1979, left some of important roads in the northern neighbourhoods "in study", without specifying their functions. However, even the "study" had not yet actually started. According to the Discussion Plan, "An investigation program to collect necessary basic data has been formulated in the meantime", and the investigation "will be conducted in 1979". In addition, it argues that this investigation "will start only after an agreement is reached with various interest groups about the scheme of the investigation"⁶. At the municipal council meeting, Wallage promised only participation in planning, and did not mention an agreement about the scheme of the investigation. The B&W, with the Discussion Plan, voluntarily proposed a new hurdle to traffic planning for the northern neighbourhoods. In response, shopkeepers of the Shopping Centre Paddepoel began to insist that an agreement about the scheme of the investigation was, based on the "promise" made by the B&W, a precondition for starting the investigation:

It was repeatedly promised by your *college*, particularly at the municipal council meeting on October 16th, 1978, that car-limiting traffic measures will not be proposed in the northern neighbourhoods around the district centre De Paddepoel without various interest groups there, among whom the Association also has to be counted, being completely involved in making the plans. This means in the concrete that an investigation will take place in consultation with these interest groups, while the implementation of the investigation will start only after an agreement is reached with various interest groups there about the scheme of the investigation and the council committee has given its approval to this scheme. That is why, this promise was also articulated in the Discussion Plan and, therefore, the area around the district centre De Paddepoel was also kept out of the Discussion Plan.⁷

In December 1979, shopkeepers of the Shopping Centre Paddepoel brought a lawsuit for the newly introduced bus lane on Pleiadenlaan to remove it, insisting that this was against the promise of the B&W. The *Raad van State*⁸ dismissed this suit in February next year, and finally, in March, the shopping centre and Wallage had reached an agreement about "working out together the scheme for the traffic investigation in the northern neighbourhoods". They agreed on establishing a "working group with representatives and experts of the municipality, businesspeople and other interest groups from the northern neighbourhoods", which would consider the scheme of the investigation. Although the municipality wanted to have "a definitive scheme of the investigation before the summer"⁹, it was in September that the working group was

officially formed. This "working group traffic investigation northern neighbourhoods"¹⁰ consisted of representatives of the following organisations, in addition to the civil servants of the municipality:

- KvK
- Working Group Transport Organisations¹¹
- Council Shopping Centre Paddepoel¹²
- Cooperative Association of Owners in the Shopping Centre De Paddepoel¹³
- schools in the northern neighbourhoods
- ENFB
- Council Service for the Elderly¹⁴
- ANIB
- ROVER
- District Consultation Vinkhuizen¹⁵
- residents

In the northern neighbourhoods, there are also shopping centres in Vinkhuizen and Selwerd, but they were not represented here, while the Shopping Centre Paddepoel was represented through two organisations.

The discussion within the working group made slow progress, and the group reached an agreement about the scheme of the investigation next year, that is, in March 1981. At the municipal council committee, Wallage indicated that this delay was caused by the negotiation with the Shopping Centre Paddepoel, saying that "it took so long because the municipality had not been in 'speaking terms' with some of the concerned"¹⁶. In fact, this shopping centre demanded an agreement also about the "second investigation" conducted several months after the northern ring road came into service, and insisted that traffic measures against through traffic, even if necessary, should be taken only after this investigation was completed. Because the municipality fixed the date of starting the investigation without accepting this demand, the shopping centre again brought a lawsuit to postpone the investigation. The Court of Groningen dismissed this as "demanding too much"¹⁷ on March 24th, and, at last, the municipality could set about the investigation. The municipality planned to introduce measures against through traffic before the opening of the northern ring road, which was scheduled for early next year, and, therefore, "the results of the investigation and the B&W's vision on them must be available before the summer"¹⁸, said Wallage. This statement, however, was followed by the "big stillness", as was the case with the Plan Traffic and Transport. After all, far from presenting a plan, even without the investigation being completed, the northern ring road came into service in May 1982. In March 1983, that is, two years after the latest article in the newspaper, the Nieuwsblad and Gezinsbode carried articles on traffic planning for the northern neighbourhoods. According to these, the working group came up with the following five "traffic models" (Figure 2), dependent on the extent of restraining car traffic:

Model 0: This model is based on maintaining the situation since May 1982 (after the opening of the northern ring road), and, in this model, no extra traffic measures are proposed. (...)

Model 1: In this model, additional measures, in the form of "cutting", are proposed for Paddepoel-north and south and the route Moesstraat - Wilgenlaan (...)

Model 2: This model is based on the same measures as proposed in Model 1, complemented through taking Zonnelaan, between Eikenlaan and Pleiadenlaan, out of the traffic structure. This is for strengthening the relationships between Paddepoel-north and the Trefkoel on one hand and the shopping centre on the other. (...)

Model 3: This model corresponds with Model 1, but without "cutting" on the route Moesstraat - Wilgenlaan. (...)

Model 2⁺: This extended Model 2 includes, in addition to traffic measures mentioned in Model 2, some complementary measures, in order to keep out remaining through traffic as much as possible, guarantee the good circulation of public transport and realise the smooth and safe management of bicycle traffic. We can think about, among others, calming car traffic at the entrances to the blocks, introducing a bus lane on Kastanjelaan and making Eikenlaan less attractive to car traffic. (...)

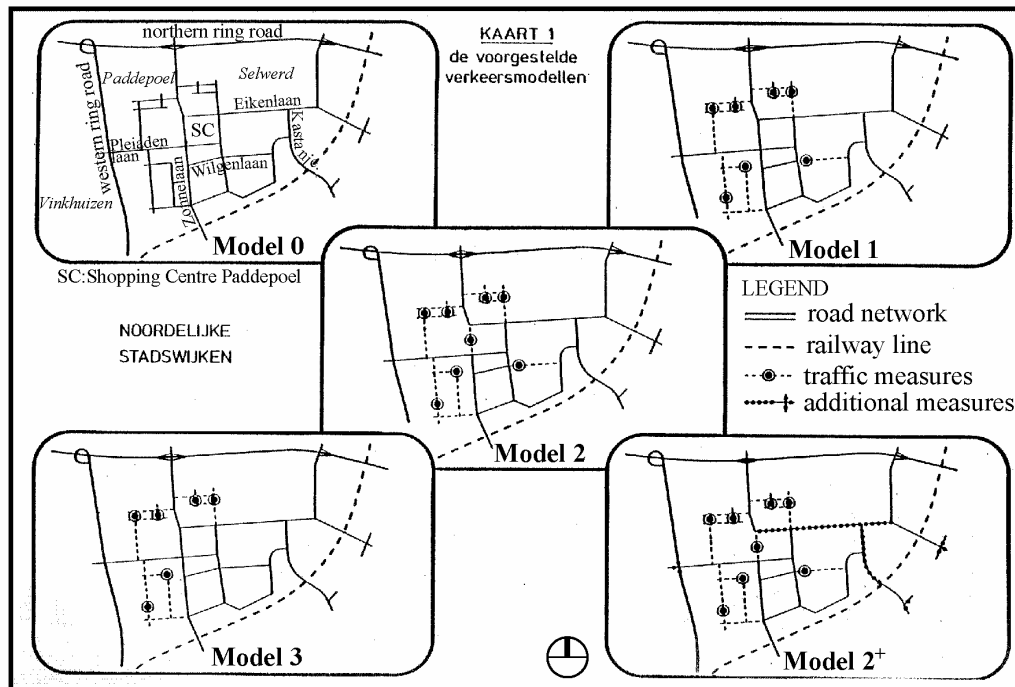


Figure 2: traffic models

As can be seen in Figure 2, Vinkhuizen, which is separated from other two neighbourhoods with the western ring road, was not dealt with any more. Without specific explanation, the "northern neighbourhoods" had meant only two neighbourhoods, Paddepoel and Selwerd. Model 2⁺ was proposed by the ENFB.

It was reported that members of the working group could not reach an agreement about these models. Representatives of the Shopping Centre Paddepoel supported Model 0, and regarded also Model 3, which did not cut Wilgenlaan, as "acceptable", if residents desired it. On the other hand, not only the ENFB but also the ROVER and the handicapped people's union, ANIB, argued for Model 2⁺. However, it ought to have been obvious, even when the investigation started two years before, that there could be these models, and, moreover, which model the shopping centre or ENFB would support and that it would be extremely difficult to reach an agreement between them.

Indeed, in March 1981, when an agreement was reached about the scheme of the investigation, Wallage warned of "too much optimism, because there is an obvious conflict of interests"¹⁹. So, the B&W ought to have made a choice, based on the result of the investigation, and presented a concrete plan. However, even after the working group presented those models, the B&W, without taking the initiative, had left planning to the municipal Department of Urban Development and Housing²⁰. Since the local election in June 1982, the B&W had been consisted of four PvdA *wethouders* and two CDA *wethouders*.

2.2 The Traffic Plan Northern Neighbourhoods

The department, in March 1983, drafted the Traffic Plan Northern Neighbourhoods²¹, based on the result of the investigation, models and responses to them within the working group. This plan first of all examines the effect of each model on neighbourhood traffic. However, after all, it does not reject any of them. For example, Model 1 and 2 include cutting Wilgenlaan for through car traffic, which the Shopping Centre Paddepoel strongly opposed. Concerning the effect of this measure, the plan presumes that "particularly Eikenlaan will remain not so busy, compared with the situation before the opening of the ring road", although it can show "no exact picture"²². Concerning the idea of taking Zonnelaan out of the traffic structure, as proposed in Model 2, it cannot tell whether an expected increase in traffic on the route Pleiadenlaan - Dierenriemstraat - Eikenlaan - Zonnelaan "will lead to a busier traffic situation in comparison with the situation before the opening of the northern ring road and will cause an unacceptable management of car traffic"²³. It does not dismiss even Model 2⁺, which expanded Model 2 in terms of measures to restrain car traffic, concluding that "a more favourable situation will emerge, compared with Model 2, and the traffic situation will perhaps remain not so busy, in comparison with the situation before the opening of the northern ring road"²⁴.

Successively, the plan proposes "measures" through "carefully trying to meet the desires of various interest groups as much as possible"²⁵. However, based on such an attitude, it is necessarily impossible to propose clear and concrete measures. For example, concerning Zonnelaan, between Eikenlaan and Pleiadenlaan, it seems to be impossible to "completely cut" it, the plan says, because "this section will completely lose its neighbourhood opening function" and because of "the fear from the shopping centre for worsening accessibility". However, "it is advisable to redesign this section". The extent of this redesign "would be able to vary from shortening the crossing distance at some places to, if desired, the complete redesign", and "In further consultation with various people concerned, versions can be worked out in the future stage and a choice can be made finally"²⁶. However, the consultation with the concerned had already been going on for more than two years within the working group.

The plan also gives up "completely cutting" Wilgenlaan, because, otherwise, "the

neighbourhood opening function is taken over by the route Moesstraat - K. de Vriezestraat - Grote Beerstraat". However, this street "has to be redesigned in accordance with its function (residential street), with the main objective of reducing the still high intensity of car traffic even after the opening of the northern ring road"²⁷. There is no specification about road design. In addition, in "4. SUMMARY", the plan says that, in evaluating the effect of each model, "The most important conclusion is that cutting Wilgenlaan will not lead to 'busier' Eikenlaan, in comparison with the situation before the opening of the northern ring road"²⁸. So, it sounds as if the plan is here recommending cutting. After all, what should be actually done with this street is, again, left to future consultation:

In consultation with residents of Wilgenlaan and other people concerned, we will have to try to reach an acceptable proposal for redesign, with the residential and staying function being the precondition.²⁹



Figure 3: Zonnelaan³⁰
(the shopping centre on the right)



Figure 4: Wilgenlaan

The department once put forward the idea of cutting Eikenlaan, as the so-called "finger exercise", which aroused strong opposition, and Model 2⁺ still argues for making Eikenlaan unattractive to car traffic. However, the plan does not deal with Eikenlaan separately, and just lists it, together with Pleiadenlaan, Zonnelaan, and so on, as one of the neighbourhood opening roads³¹, in accordance with the Definitive Plan Traffic and Transport. The Traffic Plan Northern Neighbourhoods defines the neighbourhood opening roads as follows:

The roads that belong to the main road network, that is, the northern and western ring roads, are primarily used for accepting through car traffic. On the other hand, the neighbourhood opening roads are used, as the word already suggests, for opening neighbourhoods or accepting traffic with its origin or destination within the neighbourhoods.³²

According to this definition, it seems acceptable to cut the neighbourhood opening roads. However, judging from the reason that Zonnelaan should not be cut, as seen earlier, the neighbourhood opening roads seem to carry also through traffic, and, as a result, cutting seems to be excluded here.

To sum up, this plan is very vague, leaving room for utterly different interpretations. That is why, "shopkeepers of the Shopping Centre Paddepoel find that this plan goes too far, while an interest group such as the ENFB wants much more thorough measures against car traffic"³³. After all, as before, the former continued to support Model 0 or 3, while the latter, including the ROVER and ANIB, continued to support Model 2⁺. On the other hand, the chairman of the Council Shopping Centre Paddepoel, J. van Loenen, "looks not so unsatisfied with the achieved results"³⁴. Indeed, cutting was not clearly proposed anywhere, and, moreover, even one year after the northern ring road came into service, no measures had been introduced against through traffic. Although the working group had discussed, at least formally, almost for three years, "its work proceeded slowly because of a conflict of the interests within the working group, and it was not possible to formulate a unanimous advice"³⁵, summarised the municipality.

2.3 Model 0

On October 4th, 1983, the B&W organised a public hearing about this vague Traffic Plan Northern Neighbourhoods, without committing itself to this plan nor those models. *Wethouder* Rein Zunderdorp (PvdA), who succeeded Wallage in 1981, explained the intention of this hearing to the attending "± 120 residents and representatives of the businesses in the Shopping Centre Paddepoel":

The *college* does not yet want to pronounce any judgement on these models. First it wants to give residents and businesses an opportunity to express their opinions about the traffic plan. The *wethouder* wants to know the views, opinions, suggestions and, if any, complaints of the participants about the traffic plan. What is raised this evening will be integrated by the *college* into the proposal to the municipal council. This proposal will be anyway handled at the municipal council committees Urban Development and Housing, Traffic and Public Transport and Public Works. Then, there will also be an opportunity for the concerned to participate.³⁶

After the civil servants explained the progress, the hearing entered into discussion. Here, shopkeepers of the Shopping Centre Paddepoel rejected every measure to restrain car traffic and demanded Model 0, without referring to Model 3, which they had regarded as acceptable before:

Mr. van Loenen (Council Shopping Centre Paddepoel): Businesspeople of the Shopping Centre Paddepoel are supporters of Model 0. (...) The opening of the northern ring road has already caused a decrease in sales, because through traffic has disappeared from the neighbourhoods. In order to make the shopping centre function in such a way that it was planned and intended in those days, no extra traffic measures must be taken in the neighbourhood (...).³⁷

Mr. van 't Lam (Cooperative Association of Owners in the Shopping Centre De Paddepoel): (...) Considering the results of the pre-investigation and particularly the post-investigation, only Model 0 can be chosen. (...) Accessibility to the shopping centre must not be undermined for the sake of the level of facilities that the shopping centre can offer and particularly for the sake of employment.³⁸

On the other hand, as long as those models are concerned, residents also argued only for Model 0. They insisted that accessibility to the shopping centre must be maintained, and that through traffic had already decreased after the northern ring road came into service. They opposed closing Zonnelaan to through traffic, because they feared that

this would increase traffic on surrounding roads. Although residents on Moesstraat or Wilgenlaan asked for measures against through traffic, they did not mention particular models nor ask to cut particular roads. In addition, many complaints were voiced about cyclists and busses not only by shopkeepers but also by residents, and the ENFB was asked if it could improve the manner of cyclists. After all, neither the ENFB nor the ROVER could argue for Model 2⁺ at all at this hearing. The following are some of opinions expressed by residents:

Ms. Schreuder (Ossehoederstraat, speaking for various minority groups, among others, the elderly, the handicapped, the project "FOCUS"): (...) The closure of Zonnelaan between the community centre and the shopping centre is by no means a pleasant measure for those groups mentioned: it decreases accessibility to the shopping centre by car and bus, and forces traffic on Zonnelaan, which is now busy, to choose another route. As a result, streets around the shopping centre get busier and more difficult to cross for weaker traffic participants.³⁹

Mr. Van der Maas (Zonnelaan): Mr. Van der Maas regards most of the proposed facilities as too expensive, considering the current financial situation. If there is money available, it should be spent on repairing sidewalks in some parts of the neighbourhood. In addition, Mr. Van der Maas also asks that cyclists are controlled in the pedestrian area in the shopping centre.⁴⁰

Ms. Wouts (Zonnelaan): Ms. Wouts is a supporter of Model 0. The shopping centre is well accessible in the existing situation. (...) Thanks to the opening of the ring road, there is far less congestion on the neighbourhood opening roads, and a substantial nuisance from traffic is out of question in the northern neighbourhoods.⁴¹

That is why, the Nieuwsblad dated October 5th, which reported this hearing, summarised that "If the municipality accepts the view of businesspeople of the Shopping Centre Paddepoel and a large number of residents of the neighbourhoods Paddepoel and Selwerd, the existing traffic situation remains unchanged".

However, it is one thing that most of businesspeople and residents argued for Model 0 at a public hearing, and quite another that it was a correct choice. As seen above, shopkeepers rather regarded it as a problem that through traffic had decreased thanks to the northern ring road, and rejected every measure that would bring about a further decrease in through traffic. However, if it really depended on through traffic coming from such a wide area, this means that this shopping centre was engaged in a type of business that was essentially unsuitable in the middle of residential neighbourhoods. In addition, there was a possibility that it was taking away customers not only from other neighbourhood shopping centres but also from the inner city, undermining employment there.

Opinions raised by residents are also questionable. Maintaining accessibility for neighbourhood residents is different from maintaining it for customers from a wider area. It can improve former accessibility to reduce latter, through, for example, cutting. Indeed, through traffic might have decreased as a result of the opening of the northern ring road. However, there was no guarantee that such a situation immediately after the opening could be maintained without taking any measures. Although cutting Zonnelaan might increase traffic on the roads bordering on the south and east of the shopping

centre (Pleiadenlaan and Dierenriemstraat), land uses along these roads could accept this increase. The side of the shopping centre is used for the storage and car park, except for entrances to the centre, and on the opposite side is a gas station, office buildings and a greenbelt. For neighbourhoods behind the latter side, there are other shopping centres available. Although both businesspeople and residents argued for Model 0, the former opposed reducing through traffic, while the latter clearly wished for it. However, while shopkeepers, in one united body, were crying out against any traffic measures, referring to a possible increase in unemployment, it must have been difficult for an individual resident to argue openly for other models. Furthermore, it is naturally questionable how representative those residents who expressed their opinions at this hearing were for residents as a whole. It is obvious that they did not speak for, at least, a large number of cyclists and bus passengers.

So, there were many issues that should be taken into account, besides opinions voiced at the public hearing. The leaders of the PvdA should have made a political choice without delay, considering these issues and based on principles of the party. This is what the ENFB expected of them, as mentioned later. At the start of the hearing, Zunderdorp indicated the B&W's intention to set about drafting a proposal to the municipal council after this hearing.

2.4 A traffic plan for Groningen-north

However, without completing traffic planning for the northern neighbourhoods, the B&W announced in December 1983 that it decided to make another traffic plan, Plan Traffic Structure Groningen-north⁴², which covered not only Paddepoel and Selwerd but also Korrewegwijk and the area around Noorderplantsoen. This plan must be regarded as a "supplement to the main traffic structure that the municipal council has decided in the framework of the Plan Traffic and Transport", according to the B&W, and would be "mainly related to: Ebbingestraat/ Boterdiep/ Rodeweg, Kapteynlaan/ Sumatrалаan, Korrebrug/ Korreweg, Oosterhamrikkade/ Bloemsingel, Herman Colleniusbrug/ Prinsesseweg/ Nassaulaan/ Noorderplantsoen and the neighbourhood opening structure in Paddepoel/ Selwerd"⁴³. There had been many longstanding issues in Groningen-north, besides the traffic plan for the northern neighbourhoods. For example, whether Rodeweg should be integrated into the main car structure, through traffic on Korreweg or Kapteynlaan - Sumatrалаan, closing Noorderplantsoen to cars, and so on. The Definitive Plan Traffic and Transport postponed the solving of all these issues, leaving them to the wishes of each neighbourhood. The B&W remembered, in a sense, the original reason for making the Plan Traffic and Transport that "it was obviously not desirable to decide these issues in neighbourhood traffic plans, because then the mutual relations would be lost sight of"⁴⁴, and decided to make a traffic plan for Groningen-north. Also in terms of the Municipal Program 82-86, this planning was essential for the B&W.



Figure 5: Noorderplantsoen with heavy traffic

(Source: Gezinsbode, August 20th, 1984)

As a result, traffic planning for the northern neighbourhoods was dragged into the process of making the Discussion Plan and gathering opinions about it, combined with other issues, and its completion was again postponed. At least at this moment, however, the municipal council was to decide this plan "In the middle of next year". For this, the B&W intended to publish the Discussion Plan in "approximately May/ June" 1984, and successively reserve four weeks for the public to respond to this plan. In addition, when the B&W announced this decision on planning in December, it already invited opinions from the public, saying that "we want to give the concerned an opportunity to make already now their opinions known about the main traffic structure and the neighbourhood opening structure in this area"⁴⁵.

While there was still no plan to respond to, ten written opinions had been submitted until April 1984. Among these, the KvK criticised the above schedule as being "entirely out of proportion particularly with the economic importance of this decision". It demanded "more extensive information for the business community" on the plan, and pressed for reserving "at least"⁴⁶ two months to respond. The two organisations from the Shopping Centre Paddepoel, in the co-written letter, also criticised the planned schedule, and called for arranging meetings exclusively for them before public participation started. On the contrary, the ENFB urged the B&W to take "concrete measures" quickly. Particularly concerning the northern neighbourhoods, it expressed disappointment over the fact that traffic planning there was again brought into discussion, and even argued that further participation in it was "superfluous":

As long as making this new plan is concerned, we are disappointed that the decision about the northern neighbourhoods is once again brought into discussion. An exhaustive discussion has been conducted about the traffic structure in these neighbourhoods for three years; a complete and extensive consultation has taken place. It would have been good and, in every respect, normal, if the *college* had now come up with concrete proposals for these neighbourhoods and submitted them to the municipal council for approval. It is superfluous that a participation round is once again applied

to them.⁴⁷

The ENFB also put forward its opinions about each place to which, the B&W said, this new plan would be related. Particularly, it had been, for the ENFB, "a very high priority to make Noorderplantsoen car-free as much as possible", and it argued for closing not only Leliesingel but also Kruissingel, on the condition that accessibility by car was maintained to the existing restaurant:

The excellent idea of your *college* to make Noorderplantsoen free of through car traffic has gradually become a long lingering issue. After May 1982, you cannot use the argument any more, which has been made for long years, that first the northern ring road had to be in service as an alternative. (...) The beautiful park is currently over its whole length severed by the car route, which is still particularly busy after the opening of the northern ring road. This route disrupts to a great extent the peaceful, recreational character that this park could have. This busy car route, moreover, causes a great nuisance to many cyclists and pedestrians. (...) The ENFB then also concretely proposes the following:

- a) closing Leliesingel, between Plantsoenbrug and Kerklaan, to car traffic;
- b) closing Kruissingel, between Kerklaan and Moesstraat - Nwe. Boteringestraat, to car traffic; in this case, you have to make sure that the restaurant, which is located along Kruissingel, remains accessible by car from one side; (...)⁴⁸

Concerning Noorderplantsoen, residents on adjacent Nassaulaan and Oranjesingel also submitted an written opinion, with 47 signatures. They first of all state that they "welcome" the idea of "making Noorderplantsoen car-limited, still better car-free". However, they would have "great complaints, if only Leliesingel became car-free", because then current heavy traffic on Leliesingel would just move to their own streets, which are already "extremely dangerous" with heavy traffic. That is why, like the ENFB, they ask for closing not only Leliesingel but also Kruissingel in such a way that accessibility to the restaurant is maintained through "cutting" Kruissingel there. They also ask for cutting the route Prinsesseweg - Nassaulaan - Oranjesingel somewhere, for example at the intersection of Nassaulaan and Koninginnelaan. At the end of the letter, apart from the issue concerning Noorderplantsoen, they urges the B&W to take some measures quickly against current through traffic:

Besides these, we trust that your ingenuity in decreasing car traffic on the route Kruissingel - a part of Kerklaan - Oranjesingel - Nassaulaan - Prinsesseweg and vice versa is such that we live, hopefully quickly, on quieter and safer streets than now.⁴⁹

The parents' committee of the elementary school, Nassauschool, which is situated on Nassaulaan, lodged an written opinion also for fear of an increase in through traffic. It asked for the same measures in Noorderplantsoen as residents, and, in addition, pressed for closing Herman Colleniusbrug in both directions to cars.

Businesspeople and their organisations had later conducted a vigorous campaign against closing Noorderplantsoen to cars, as mentioned later. However, at this stage, such a campaign had not yet started, with only an article in the Nieuwsblad reporting that "The shopkeepers on Nieuwe Boteringestraat and Kerklaan will resist to the last ditch municipal plans to close Noorderplantsoen to cars"⁵⁰. Residents around Rodeweg,

who had persistently opposed the idea of integrating the road into the so-called accessibility route⁵¹, again submitted a written opinion opposing this idea.

After receiving these written opinions, in May 1984, that is, as scheduled, the B&W published the draft of the traffic plan for Groningen-north, Discussion Plan Intermediate Step. This plan was named like this, because this was intended to be a plan "between the Definitive Plan Traffic and Transport and the neighbourhood traffic plans".⁵²



Figure 6: Oranjesingel



Figure 7: Nassaulaan
(Nassauschool on the right)



Figure 8: Leliesingel



Figure 9: Kruissingel

3. The Discussion Plan Intermediate Step

3.1 Meeting traffic demand

The Discussion Plan Traffic and Transport already avoided phrases such as "keeping out through traffic" and "making car-limited". The Discussion Plan Intermediate Step went one step further, and put forward the standpoint that these objectives of past traffic planning should not necessarily be adhered to.

In "INTRODUCTION", the B&W first of all refers not only to a campaign against through traffic that was conducted by residents on Sumatrалаan and Kapteynlaan but also to a campaign to keep through traffic that was conducted mainly by shopkeepers in the Shopping Centre Paddepoel, opposing the "finger exercise". It successively argues as follows:

The western, northern and the greatest part of the eastern ring roads are in service, and their effects are known. It is now the time to decide whether and if so to what extent through car traffic can and must be excluded from the northern neighbourhoods.⁵³

So, the B&W wants to discuss the necessity itself to exclude through traffic. Also in "1. OBJECTIVE OF THE PLAN", it indicates such an attitude by using the word "traffic livability"⁵⁴ instead of "traffic-limited" when it explains the principle of this plan:

The principle is here to concentrate car traffic on main routes in order to increase traffic safety and traffic livability in the areas between these routes. Particularly, to make this possible, high investments are made in the ring road system.⁵⁵

We can understand that the ring roads are completed to concentrate cars here, but are not sure whether measures against through traffic are taken in the neighbourhoods to push cars into the ring roads. Such measures might be dismissed as undermining traffic livability. Furthermore, in "1.2.2. Traffic, economy and livability", the B&W brings forward arguments with which it almost justifies not taking measures actively against through traffic. Here, first the B&W does not regard it as an objective of a traffic policy any longer to facilitate bicycle and bus traffic and restrain car traffic, which had been the kernel of the PvdA traffic policy since the 1970s. According to the B&W, although it is in fact just a "measure" to influence the choice of traffic modes in favour of bicycles and busses, "some" have gained the "impression that this measure has been raised to the objective", which "has resulted in the image of an anti-car policy" among them. The B&W casually stipulates that the "true main objective of a traffic policy" is "to meet traffic demand". It then argues that traffic demand of residents has recently changed. Residents do not appreciate "complicated traffic systems" any longer, while "accessibility by car obviously plays an important role in judging the quality of the residential situation". As a result, there emerges "differentiation" among residents with regard to the "interest of keeping out through car traffic". Also in terms of economy, the B&W puts forward negative or passive arguments for measures against through traffic. "Good accessibility by car can be important to maintain employment", and, particularly in these days of high unemployment, "it is an important social argument to

be careful in limiting accessibility by car". In addition, "the general economic development has anyway temporarily put an end to the threat that the automatic growth of car traffic had posed". The conclusion of the B&W is that "The choice of policy concerning traffic in Groningen-north must be made against the background of changed views on the content of the concept livability and a changed economic situation"⁵⁶.

Each of these arguments is highly questionable. It has been a principle of traffic planning since the 1970s that traffic demand should be met selectively, dependent on traffic modes. It should be an essential objective of traffic planning to facilitate bicycles and public transport on one hand and restrain car traffic on the other, whether or not it is called an "anti-car policy". Indeed, when the B&W talks about the "core of a traffic policy", it attaches a condition, "as long as it on balance contributes to the public interests", to the objective of meeting traffic demand. However, this condition is needless to say. The B&W should have presented its view on how to achieve "the public interests". Although it has generally been true that residents regard accessibility by car as essential, it has also been true that it is not essential for them to be able to reach their houses by car through the shortest routes. Considering their opinions introduced in this paper or preceding papers, residents, at least in Groningen, had obviously continued to ask for keeping through traffic out of their neighbourhoods, and in this respect their view on livability had not changed at all. It was the opinion of shopkeepers or business organisations that "good accessibility by car" was essential for keeping employment, and the result of the VCP has proved that this is not necessarily the case⁵⁷. Concerning the last argument ("the general economic development (...)"), the B&W does not present any statistics to prove this, and even if this was true, this could not be the reason not to take measures against through traffic, because there were already many traffic problems happening and "the threat" was only "temporarily" gone.

The B&W left the objective of this plan extremely general, but indicated repeatedly that it did not regard it as all-important to keep out through traffic. Successively, it examines the "traffic structure" and "measures" for each of sub-areas, that is, Sub-area I (Selwerd and Paddepoel), Sub-area II (Noorderplantsoen and its environs) and Sub-area III (Korrewegwijk).

3.2 Sub-area I (Selwerd and Paddepoel)

The Traffic Plan Northern Neighbourhoods, which was drafted for this area by the Department of Urban Development and Housing, adopted the neighbourhood opening roads that the Definitive Plan Traffic and Transport allocated without any explanation. The Discussion Plan Intermediate Step argues that these neighbourhood opening roads should be succeeded, because, in working out the Traffic Plan Northern Neighbourhoods, "it has been clear that the network of the neighbourhood opening roads, which was temporarily proposed in the Definitive Plan Traffic and Transport, can be now regarded as definitive without complaint"⁵⁸ (Figure 10). However, neither

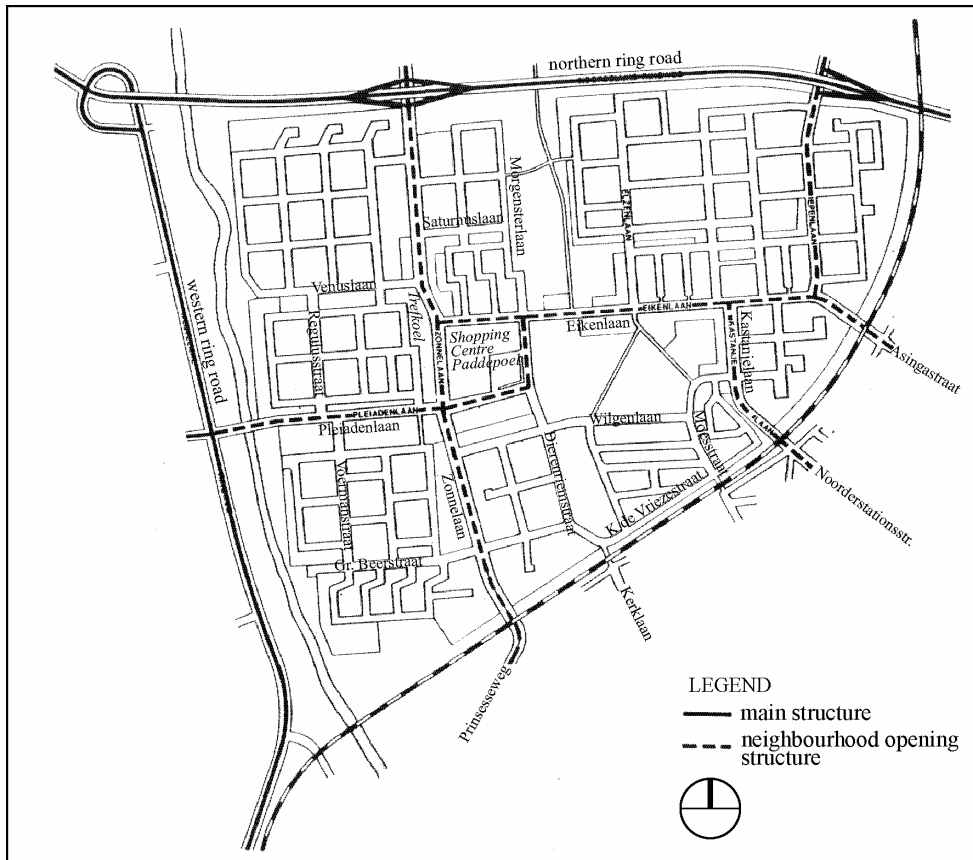


Figure 10: The traffic structure for Sub-area I

the Definitive Plan Traffic and Transport nor the Traffic Plan Northern Neighbourhoods clearly defined the function of these neighbourhood opening roads, and, as a result, even if no complaints had been submitted, interest groups, for example shopkeepers in the Shopping Centre Paddepoel and the ENFB, might have assumed a different function from each other. In this regard, the Discussion Plan Intermediate Step is still vague, just saying that, "for a good management of car traffic bounded to neighbourhoods", "a distinction is made between the neighbourhood opening roads and the rest of the roads". However, successively, it argues that "The current situation in the planning area deviates from the picture that is considered desirable in the Definitive Plan" Traffic and Transport, and, as one of such examples, it points out that "almost all the neighbourhood opening roads accept a considerable percentage of through traffic"⁵⁹. So, we can presume that the neighbourhood opening roads should not accept at least "a considerable percentage" of through traffic, and, on "almost all the neighbourhood opening roads", some measures must be taken against through traffic.

However, this plan does not actually propose any such measures for the neighbourhood opening roads in Sub-area I. For example, the Traffic Plan Northern Neighbourhoods designated Eikenlaan as a neighbourhood opening road, without specific explanation. The Discussion Plan Intermediate Step argues that "This conclusion can be taken over",

and clearly rejects measures against through traffic on this road, "Considering the negative consequences". However, it does not explain at all the content of "the negative consequences". As an alternative measure, it puts forward an idea of "promoting the use of the ring road system through an aggressive publicity campaign". Although the Traffic Plan Northern Neighbourhoods gave up "completely cutting" Zonnelaan, it recommended to "redesign it in such a way that particularly the relationships between the Trefkoel/ Paddepoel-north and the shopping centre is improved". The Discussion Plan Intermediate Step gives up even redesigning it, because, for example, only negative opinions were voiced at the public hearing, and instead promises to examine measures dealing with complaints about busses there:

The cost, however, would be expensive. Moreover, considering that only negative reactions were brought forward from the participation, and that the general interests of traffic make the measure strictly necessary, it is better to give up it. However, we have to examine whether something can be done about complaints about the noise of halting busses (see the result of the participation).⁶⁰

The plan is very careful in taking measures against through traffic also for "the rest of the roads", which are ranked lower, in terms of traffic function, than the neighbourhood opening roads. As can be seen in Figure 2, all models except for Model 0 argued for cutting the routes Grote Beerstraat - Voermanstraat, Regulusstraat - Venuslaan and Morgensterlaan - Saturnuslaan. Although this plan admits that "measures on these streets by no means influence accessibility (by car) of other parts of the neighbourhood", it proposes "simple measures" "that force adapted driving behaviour or make through traffic impossible", keeping open the possibility of maintaining through traffic. In addition, it insists that such measures can be introduced "only if a questionnaire clearly shows the wish of the residents". On the other hand, it rejects the measure of cutting Wilgenlaan, because it causes the shift of through traffic to Eikenlaan. For Wilgenlaan and Moesstraat, it proposes "for the time being only such a redesign that a speed limit of 30 km/h can be introduced". The B&W will "later consider far-reaching measures, if necessary"⁶¹.

The B&W had finally made a choice concerning the northern neighbourhoods, which obviously reflected the view of shopkeepers and opinions voiced by residents at a single public hearing. On the contrary, it hardly accepted the arguments submitted by the ENFB or ROVER.

3.3 Sub-area II (Noorderplantsoen and its environs)

For this area, the plan exclusively examines the possibility of closing Noorderplantsoen to cars. After referring to the progress around this idea, it argues that "Now that the ring road system is completed in the near future, this project must be worked out"⁶². In terms of the traffic structure, it concludes that Leliesingel and Kruissingel are not necessary for opening the surrounding neighbourhoods, and argues for closing both roads to cars, except for Leliesingel in the south of Grote Leliestraat, which is kept open for cars to maintain accessibility to Hortusbuurt. As a result, it puts forward the neighbourhood opening structure for the whole area like Figure 11.

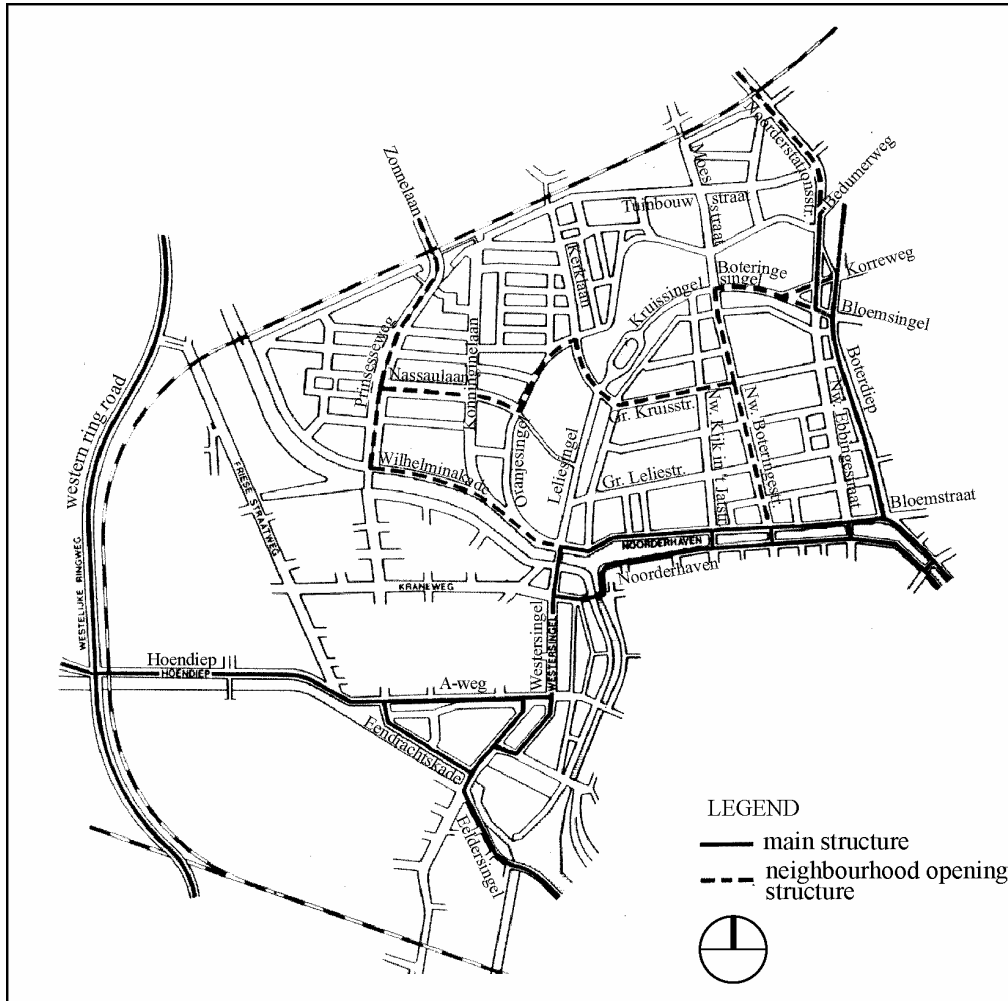


Figure 11: The traffic structure for Sub-area II

Successively, it examines the effect of this structure on shops on Kerklaan and Moesstraat, and argues that, because accessibility to these shops is sufficiently maintained even if Noorderplantsoen is closed to cars, "their sales will not strongly be influenced". On the other hand, concerning the effect on the adjacent neighbourhood opening roads, it estimates a change in traffic as in Table 1. Based on this, it says that an expected increase in traffic is "not worrying", and a change in noise is also "negligibly small". This estimation, however, presupposes that "effective measures" are taken, apart from closing the park, and the plan emphasises that these measures are "preconditions" for enforcing the proposed neighbourhood opening structure. These measures consist of two types, that is, measures within the adjacent neighbourhoods and measures outside them:

- measures in the neighbourhoods themselves, in order to make the neighbourhood opening structure unattractive to through traffic
- measures outside the neighbourhoods, in order to offer an alternative for through traffic⁶³

	current situation	in new neighbourhood opening
Kerklaan (between Kruissingel and Grachtstraat)	353	±270
Oranjesingel (between Kerklaan and Nassaulaan)	338	±370
Oranjesingel (between Nassaulaan and Wilhelminakade, without "cutting")	±100	±190
Nassaulaan (without "cutting" on Oranjesingel)	360	330
Nassaulaan (with "cutting" on Oranjesingel)	360	±420
Grote and Kleine Kruisstraat	190	250

(vehicle/hour in evening rush hours (16:30 - 17:30))

Table 1: An estimated change in traffic on neighbourhood opening roads

According to the above "measures in the neighbourhoods themselves", unlike in Sub-area I, the plan here tries to keep through traffic out of the neighbourhood opening roads. However, strangely enough, such measures are not concretely proposed at all. Proposed related to the neighbourhood opening roads are only surfacing Wilhelminakade with asphalt, and surfacing Prinsesseweg with asphalt and introducing bike paths there. These are rather measures to accept through traffic. For those neighbourhood opening roads in Table 1, there are no measures proposed, although residents of the area feared of an increase in through traffic precisely on these roads, as we can see in their written opinions.

On the other hand, the plan also points out the possibility that through traffic might increase on the following "rest of the roads" after the park is closed:

- Oranjesingel between Nassaulaan and Wilhelminakade
- Koninginnelaan between Nassaulaan and Wilhelminakade
- Grachtstraat
- Noorderbinnensingel

However, it is again very cautious in taking measures against through traffic on these streets:

In further working out in a neighbourhood traffic plan, we will have to decide whether measures are necessary, and, if so, what. The most far-reaching consequence is to introduce the one-way traffic system that makes through traffic impossible. Preferable is to introduce 30 km/h with accompanying changes of the road, but the question is whether this measure has a sufficient effect. It is also advisable to at first see if a shortcut develops.⁶⁴

Concerning Herman Colleniusbrug, which Nassauschool asked for closing to cars, the plan argues that "we will have to settle for one-way traffic in a northerly direction"⁶⁵, taking into account wholesale shops that were located on Wilhelminakade in those days. Finally among measures in the neighbourhoods, the restaurant in the park "must remain well accessible by car"⁶⁶, the plan says.

The plan proposes two measures that should be taken outside the neighbourhoods, both

of which are related to Boterdiep. One is to improve the accessibility route Bedumerweg - Boterdiep in order to accept through traffic in a southerly direction in Noorderplantsoen. The plan explains this measure in detail in the chapter dealing with Sub-area III. Another measure is to add a lane to the northern section of Diepenring (Turfsingel), from Ebbingebrug to Boterdiep, as an alternative route for through traffic in a northerly direction in the park.

Making one step backward in the Definitive Plan Traffic and Transport, the B&W had chosen to close Noorderplantsoen to cars. However, it did not propose "effective measures" enough to relieve anxiety of residents about the shift of through traffic from the park.

3.4 Sub-area III (Korrewegwijk)

Through traffic on Sumatrалаan and Kapteynlaan had consistently caused a nuisance to the adjacent neighbourhoods since the 1970s, even after their intersections were narrowed in 1980, and the northern and a part of the eastern ring roads were in service. Korreweg, which crosses at the middle of both roads, had also suffered from heavy through traffic, and, for example, residents around this road submitted a "stiff letter" to then *wethouder* Wallage in 1979:

In the short term, that is, before accidents happen to our children, you have to put an end to the irresponsible traffic situation on Korreweg. If the municipality cannot do anything about this, we, residents of Westindischebuurt, will ourselves have to see in what manner this situation can be brought to an end.⁶⁷

The plan examines whether these three roads should be designated as neighbourhood opening roads. These roads have now "much more than a neighbourhood opening role", and their designation as neighbourhood opening roads depends on "whether through traffic can be still well managed without these three streets", it says. Again, the plan assumes that the neighbourhood opening roads basically do not accept through traffic. Concerning Korreweg, because there are sufficient alternative routes, it concludes that "the function of Korreweg can be limited to that of the neighbourhood opening road". On the other hand, to the route Sumatrалаan - Kapteynlaan, "The only conceivable alternative" is the "so called detour route" "Kapteynbrug - Oosterhamrikkade northern side - Bloemsingel - Boterdiep - Bedumerweg" via Rodeweg. That is why, if Rodeweg is integrated into the accessibility route, through the "reconstruction" of Rodeweg, and the detour route is streamlined, then the traffic function of Sumatrалаan and Kapteynlaan can also "be limited to that of the neighbourhood opening road".⁶⁸

The plan also examines the function of Asingastraat, which is situated on the extension of the route Sumatrалаan - Kapteynlaan. The road has only the function "for directly adjoining areas", which "in itself justifies no neighbourhood opening function". Furthermore, if this road is integrated into the neighbourhood opening structure, the "intermediate distributing ring"⁶⁹ is closed between Petrus Campersingel and Eikenlaan, and, as a result, "it becomes more difficult to transfer through traffic to the ring road",

the rush hours and unacceptable from the point of view of safety". In addition, it is "too expensive" to widen the bridge. Although there are retail shops on Ulgersmaweg and Pop Dijkemaweg, they "orient themselves toward a much wider area" and their accessibility has been generally "improved with the construction of the ring road system and will be further improved"⁷², even if without Korrebrug.

For the route Kapteynlaan - Sumatrалаан - Asingastraat, the plan presents the following five alternatives as measures taken there, including their effects:

- (a) A system of one-way traffic and other measures that makes through car traffic almost impossible any more from the north to the south and vice versa between Oosterhamrikkanaal and Bedumerweg. (...)
- (b) Preventing traffic from the north to the south and vice versa through reconstructing the intersection of Kapteynlaan, Korreweg and Sumatrалаан (...)
- (c) Preventing traffic from the north to the south and vice versa through reconstructing the intersection of Sumatrалаан, Bedumerweg and Asingastraat (...)
- (d) Closing the underpass of the railway line on Asingastraat (...)
- (e) Only limited improvement of the route Oosterhamrikkade so that traffic is more or less spread over Kapteynlaan - Sumatrалаан and this route. In principle, the current situation is thus then maintained. (...)

As the plan did for the traffic structure, it combines these measures with the manner in which Bedumerweg and Boterdiep are connected each other. If Rodeweg is inserted in-between ("trace C"), then a smooth detour route can be realised, and through traffic can be excluded from the route Kapteynlaan - Sumatrалаан. As a result, the measure (a) or (b) is possible. The plan calls this "package of choices" "MODEL I". With this model, the houses on Rodeweg would get the level of noises far beyond the criterion stipulated by the law, and therefore "it is inevitable to purchase and demolish" these houses (Figure 13). On the other hand, if Rodeweg is not involved ("trace 0"), then, between Bedumerweg and Boterdiep, "through traffic can be guided into Gedempte Boterdiep through the smoother alignment of the main roadway and the loop-shaped entrance to Nieuwe Ebbingestraat" (Figure 14). In this case, because there is no sufficient detour route, the measure (c), (d) or (e) can be introduced. This package is named "MODEL II".

Although the plan presents a table in which these two packages are compared in terms of their effects on environment, traffic, and so on, it after all refrains from choosing between them, just saying that "The choice will depend on the political weight that is applied to the advantages and disadvantages". That is why, its formal "recommendation" is to "Make a choice between MODEL I and MODEL II". However, because "a solution must be preferred with which the demolition of a large number of houses can be avoided", the plan argues that "MODEL II must be temporarily given a preference". With this model, however, Sumatrалаан and Kapteynlaan continue to have "much more than a neighbourhood opening role", as the plan itself mentioned, and, according to the comparative table, "the improvement on Kapteynlaan and Sumatrалаан will be small to very small. These streets remain unsuitable for families

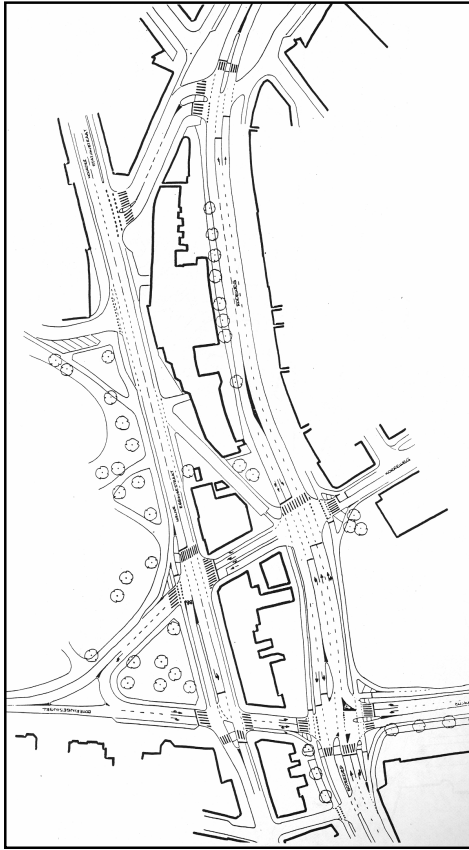


Figure 13: trace C

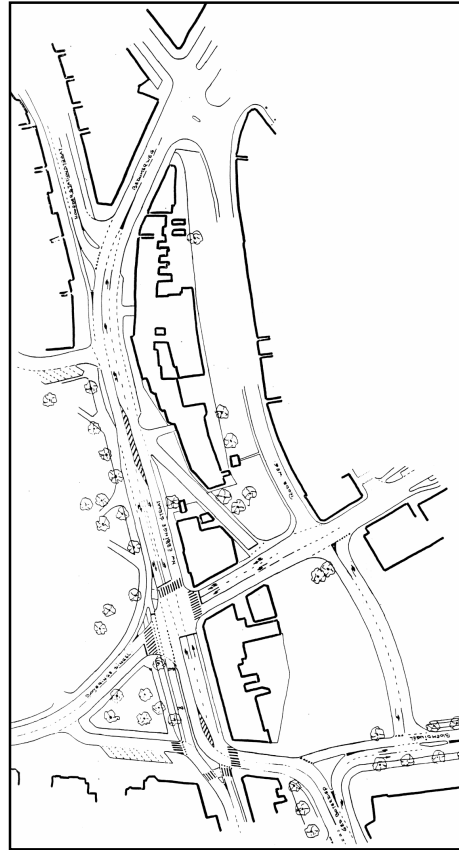


Figure 14: trace 0

with children"⁷³. The plan also expresses a preference between the measures (a) - (e), and it prefers the measure (b) to (a) in the case of MODEL I, and the measure (c) to (d) and (e) in the case of MODEL II, without providing any reason. It is obvious that the plan favours measures that less prevent through traffic.

To sum up, the Discussion Plan Intermediate Step casts doubt on the principle of a traffic policy of keeping through traffic out of residential neighbourhoods, which the PvdA of Groningen had advocated since the 1970s, and, with regard to concrete measures, it almost seems to try to find ways of keeping through traffic as much as possible, in some cases postponing choices. It was in 1984 that the PvdA of Groningen had revealed a drastic change (*omslag*) in its policy in urban planning under *wethouder* Ypke Gietema⁷⁴. We can see that traffic planning was not free from this *omslag*. Closing Noorderplantsoen and Korrebrug can be regarded as the only measures that had originated in the 1970s and survived this *omslag*. The editorial in the *Gezinsbode* dated June 13th, 1984, pointed out that a traffic policy under *wethouder* Zunderdorp had "a clearly more modest atmosphere than in the 1970s", and referred to, as the "textbook example", the fact that "plans to cut the flow of traffic in the northern neighbourhoods have been shelved". On the other hand, in the published Discussion Plan, "a heritage of Van den Berg and Wallage is still well recognisable", and "The textbook example of this is the attempt to close Noorderplantsoen to through traffic",

the editorial argued.

In the letter attached to the plan, the B&W presented the further procedure. The deadline to respond had been, as demanded by the KvK, put back to August 1st. Two public hearings were scheduled. The first one (June 5th) would put the "accent" on Korrewegwijk, and the second one (June 13th) on Noorderplantsoen and its environs. So, no hearing was scheduled specifically for Selwerd and Paddepoel, where discussion had been going on and a public hearing had already been held. According to the B&W, "The decision by the municipal council is expected in October" 1984.

4. Reactions to the Discussion Plan

4.1 Businesspeople

Although the B&W did its utmost not to take measures against car traffic, businesspeople and their organisations concentrated their objections on remaining such measures, including those that were just presented as alternatives. They pointed out not only a possible decline in sales but also a decrease in employment and even negative effects on residents, insisting that those measures were against the interests of citizens as a whole.

The closure of Noorderplantsoen was strongly opposed particularly by shopkeepers on adjacent Kerklaan. The Neighbourhood Association Noorderplantsoenbuurt⁷⁵, whose executive included not only residents but also a few shopkeepers on Kerklaan, commissioned the research bureau Interval to investigate the effects of the closure. The result revealed that 11 % of sales on Kerklaan and Moesstraat originated from drivers who came from outside the neighbourhood. Based on this result, the shopkeepers insisted that, if the park was closed, "businesses will have to be closed or businesspeople will be forced to move their businesses", and this would lead to "a rapid deterioration of the neighbourhood"⁷⁶. In relation to the effects on the neighbourhood, they also brought forward a possible increase in crime and through traffic, and, as a result of the latter, the recreational use of the park would be rather undermined, they said.

Shopkeepers' organisations on Korreweg, Nieuwe Ebbingestraat, Westersingel, and so on also unanimously opposed closing Noorderplantsoen to cars. Among others, shopkeepers on Nieuwe Ebbingestraat attended both of the public hearings, and expressed objections one after another against this and other measures proposed in the Discussion Plan. At the second hearing on June 13th, the representative of the Businesspeople's Club Nieuwe Ebbingestraat⁷⁷, I.S. Oosterhof, read out the "declaration" of the club. Concerning the closure of Noorderplantsoen, the declaration first of all warns the neighbourhoods that, because this "will further attract undesirable individuals", it "will still more threaten the safety of citizens", and then states that "Also from a commercial point of view, we will strongly resist making Noorderplantsoen and Korrebrug car-free"⁷⁸.

As an additional measure for closing Noorderplantsoen, the B&W proposed one-way traffic on Herman Colleniusbrug, giving up, for nearby businesses, closing it completely. Even against this measure, however, businesses on Wilhelminakade and Prinsesseweg made serious objections. Shopkeepers in the Shopping Centre Paddepoel also opposed this measure. Because, as long as Sub-area I is concerned, most of their demands were accepted, the Cooperative Association of Owners of this shopping centre, in its written opinion, regarded the Discussion Plan as "clear, objective and consistent", and expressed an "appreciation" for this plan. On the other hand, it still had

"necessary concern" with one-way traffic on Herman Colleniusbrug and the closure of the underpass on Asingastraat, which was presented as one of alternatives. According to this association, these measures would threaten "about 10 to 13 %" of sales and, as a result, "50 to 65 jobs"⁷⁹ in the shopping centre. Shopkeepers in the shopping centre attended the first public hearing on June 5th, which was mainly intended for Korrewegwijk, and repeatedly opposed these two measures, quoting the above numbers.

Concerning the closure of Korrebrug, shopkeepers on Korreweg, Ulgersmaweg or Nieuwe Ebbingestraat opposed for fear of a "considerable decline in sales"⁸⁰. Although the Discussion Plan presented only some alternative measures for the route Kapteynlaan - Sumatralaan - Asingastraat, many objections were lodged against preventing the flow of car traffic on this route, as can be seen in the written opinion of the Shopping Centre Paddepoel. On the other hand, interestingly, the Businesspeople's Association Korreweg⁸¹ insisted that this route "must maintain a neighbourhood opening function"⁸². According to the Discussion Plan, however, this route had "much more than a neighbourhood opening role" in the status quo, and only if an alternative route is available and through traffic can be excluded, this route can be "limited" to a neighbourhood opening function. Therefore, for this association, the neighbourhood opening road was a road that had "much more than a neighbourhood opening role", and it actually demanded not to take any measures against through traffic.

Combining the measures on this route with the connection between Bedumerweg and Boterdiep, the B&W presented two models, and temporarily gave a preference to MODEL II, which did not involve Rodeweg. To this model, particularly to the attached illustration of the connection (Figure 14), shopkeepers on Nieuwe Ebbingestraat raised a strenuous objection. According to them, this "loop", with which "car traffic would be automatically guided into Boterdiep", "will have further negative effects on the businesses". They insisted that "Traffic must maintain a free choice between driving into Nieuwe Ebbingestraat and swinging toward Boterdiep, as is now the case".⁸³

While businesspeople and their organisations opposed nearly all of those measures against through traffic, they unanimously demanded not to take any measures until the ring roads were completed, as in the case of the Plan Traffic and Transport. For example, shopkeepers on Nieuwe Ebbingestraat argued that it was a waste of public money to introduce measures before the opening of the whole ring road system, speaking for residents as well as businesspeople:

We pressingly demand you: Don't take further costly measures until the ring roads are in service, including the eastern ring road. It greatly irritates residents and businesspeople that the municipality spends still more public money on various plans, which are perhaps not necessary after the opening of the ring roads. We, residents and businesspeople, want to emphasise that, certainly in this time of economising, money could be spent better.⁸⁴

Shopkeepers in the Shopping Centre Paddepoel again pointed out the negative effect of

the northern ring road, with numbers this time. It had caused a decline in sales of "7 million guilders on an annual basis", which "corresponds to 35 salespeople". Based on this experience, they insisted that it was "more advisable"⁸⁵ to wait until the ring roads were completed. Obviously, they did not hope that the opening of the ring roads would reduce through traffic in the neighbourhoods, but rather feared that it might further reduce through traffic.

These opinions, which were expressed by shopkeepers and their organisations on each street, were echoed by citywide business organisations. For example, the KNOV, in its "extensive report", predicted the effect of the Discussion Plan on each shopping street, and insisted that a decline in sales and jobs would amount to as much as 10 to 65 %. Particularly, the closure of Noorderplantsoen and the connection between Bedumerweg and Boterdiep based on MODEL II would be "disastrous" for Nieuwe Ebbingestraat. Based on its "responsibility to make sure that the costs resulting from the traffic plan are not passed on to employers and employees", the municipal council must say an "explicit no"⁸⁶ against the plan, insisted the KNOV. The NCOV did "not want to go into details in its reaction", and first of all argued that it was basically against the public interests to restrain car traffic:

Car traffic in many cases has and gives an economic stimulus, or it is an expression of personal welfare and therefore accumulated into the public interests. Therefore, it is contrary to the municipal policy to restrain car traffic.

It also argued that "it has an direct effect on sales and business and shipping costs to reduce accessibility, with the result for employment". Because the ring road system would solve most of existing "bottlenecks", the municipality must not take any measures "before the ring road system is completed and can be evaluated". Even if some "small bottlenecks" remain, they must be solved through "improving the surface structure in place of preventing car traffic"⁸⁷, according to the NCOV.

The KvK, representing also these two business organisations, submitted a similar written opinion. It regarded the closure of Noorderplantsoen as "fatal", and the closure of Korrebrug as "particularly unfavourable and also incomprehensible for many". The ring roads first had to be completed, because, "only after we know the effect of the opening of the complete ring road system, we can see whether additional measures are still necessary".⁸⁸ The Working Group Transport Organisations of the KvK separately submitted a written opinion, with similar content. It opposed closing Noorderplantsoen and Korrebrug, and anyway opposed all measures before the ring roads were completed. On the other hand, it had an "intolerable objection to cutting the connection Petrus Campersingel - Kapteynlaan - Sumatralaan - Asingastraat - Eikenlaan"⁸⁹. So, it wanted to maintain this "intermediate distribution ring" as the through traffic route for lorries, even after the whole ring road system was in service.

In addition, a federation or consultative body that consisted of the above organisations also submitted written opinions, repeating the above opinions. The Consultative Body

Small and Medium-sized Business⁹⁰, in which representatives of, besides the municipality, the KvK, GOF, KNOV, NCOV, and so on, participated, warned that those measures proposed in the Discussion Plan would "have remarkable results", and that "an expected decline in sales results in almost the same percentage of a decline in a net profit and a loss of jobs". And it again concluded that "it is at this moment not meaningful to make a plan and decision, while the ring road system is not fully completed"⁹¹. The Businesspeople's Consultation Traffic Structure Groningen-north⁹² was an "ad-hoc" organisation established in response to the Discussion Plan, and its written opinion was signed by "all businesspeople's associations that are active in the planning area". Its content was actually a collection of opinions put forward by individual organisations, calling the closure of Korrebrug a "disastrous measure"⁹³, demanding to first complete the ring roads, and so on.

When the Discussion Plan Traffic and Transport was published in 1979, the trade unions responded differently from business organisations. Particularly, the Transport Union FNV⁹⁴ went so far as to say that "The plan is in our view a thorough piece of work, and will be able to offer advantages to every road user in Groningen"⁹⁵. However, to the Intermediate Step, they clearly showed opposition out of concern for its negative effect on employment, which had been repeatedly mentioned by business organisations. The Service Sector Union FNV⁹⁶ expected that, "if the plans cause a decline in sales in some retail and wholesale shops, employment in these sectors declines"⁹⁷, and asked the municipal council to oppose the plan, as long as the ring roads were not completed. Moreover, the Service Sector Union CNV⁹⁸ took the initiative in organising the Action Committee Northern Neighbourhoods⁹⁹, which consisted of employers' organisations such as the NCOV and KNOV, and the trade union, CNV, and volunteered the role of "coordinator". The chairman of this action committee and division director of the Service Sector Union CNV, Bart Top, based on the prediction by the KNOV, insisted that the Discussion Plan would cause a "destruction of 20 % of employment", which was "translated into 800 jobs, that is, 500 full-time and 300 part-time jobs"¹⁰⁰. The action committee organised an "action meeting" on August 29th, 1984, to discuss its future action, where Top stirred up determined opposition, saying that "We will frustrate the plans at all costs. If necessary, we will close main roads and block bridges"¹⁰¹. On September 5th, it held a meeting to which it invited all political parties, and put forward a "wish" of the action committee to put "in deep freeze the plan with traffic measures for the northern neighbourhoods and leave it until half a year after the opening of the complete ring road system". Because "It is evident for us that many proposed measures are not necessary any more, if the eastern ring road is in service. Why should we now try to solve the bottlenecks, while they soon automatically disappear?"¹⁰²

4.2 Residents

Most of responses from residents were seemingly not in conflict with those from the business community. It was rather a minority that asked for taking more measures

against through traffic, or supported such measures in the Discussion Plan.

Neither individual residents nor their organisations submitted any written opinions in Sub-area I, for which the Discussion Plan proposed only very modest and vague measures against through traffic.

Concerning the closure of Noorderplantsoen in Sub-area II, surrounding neighbourhoods started to display anxiety and even opposition. From Oranjebuurt¹⁰³, those residents on Nassaulaan and Oranjesingel, who had already submitted a written opinion before the Discussion Plan was published, again responded. In the last letter, they first of all welcomed the closure, and asked for measures to prevent through traffic in the park from shifting to their streets. This time, they were "afraid of an increase in car traffic on the residential streets of Oranjebuurt based on the statistics" as shown in Table 1, and asked not to designate the route Prinsesseweg - Nassaulaan - Oranjesingel as a neighbourhood opening route. Rather, a speed limit of 30 km/h should be established for these streets, and one-way traffic introduced on Nassaulaan in an easterly direction. In addition, they stated that "Noorderplantsoen must be kept open for car traffic"¹⁰⁴. The Neighbourhood Association Oranjebuurt¹⁰⁵ organised the Working Group Traffic Oranjebuurt¹⁰⁶ to examine the closure of the park. The working group demanded the following "additional measures" to prevent the shift of through traffic, and argued that they could accept the closure, "Only if these measures are implemented":

- thoroughly redesigning Prinsesseweg so that no through car traffic can drive from Zonnelaan to Prinsesseweg (by means of (...) reducing the width of Prinsesseweg to one lane in each direction, while bike paths can be introduced and the road can be surfaced with asphalt);
- one-way traffic on Nassaulaan in an easterly direction, with the exception of bus and bicycle traffic, and cutting the southern part of Koninginnelaan (...);
- preventing through car traffic from Schilderswijk to Paddepoel, with, for example, a design that forces drivers to turn to the right into Nassaulaan;
- no right turn at the intersection of Kerklaan and Oranjesingel coming from Oranjesingel;
- designating the whole neighbourhood as a 30 km/h zone, and putting speed bumps, chicanes¹⁰⁷, and the like on various places.¹⁰⁸

The parents' committee of Nassauschool, which had submitted a written opinion before, was "shocked that it is clear from the Plan Intermediate Step that traffic increases in Oranjebuurt, and nota bene on Oranjesingel and Nassaulaan"¹⁰⁹, and pressed for, before closing the park, taking those measures demanded by the working group. Neither the working group nor the parents' committee opposed the closure, but, on the other hand, they were obviously not enthusiastic about it.

Residents of Hortusbuurt, which is situated on the opposite side of Oranjebuurt across Noorderplantsoen, "completely reject" the closure, according to its neighbourhood association. The association "particularly fears for the accessibility to the neighbourhood from the south"¹¹⁰. Taking into account this accessibility, the Discussion Plan left open Leliesingel in the south of Grote Leliestraat. This measure

was after all found insufficient by the neighbourhood.

In the area around Noorderplantsoen, residents themselves conducted some questionnaires, all of which showed that the overwhelming majority of respondents opposed its closure. Particularly, the questionnaire that was conducted mainly for Noorderplantsoenbuurt by "Marten Damstra and some other neighbourhood residents who do not agree with the plans" was given extensive coverage by the *Gezinsbode* dated August 20th, 1984. The questionnaire first of all puts forward "advantages and disadvantages of car-free Noorderplantsoen". As advantages, it mentions "a quieter park" or "the park becomes a complete playing field". As disadvantages, it mentions "an increased possibility of crime", "the park becomes less accessible (also for children)", "the loss of shops on Kerklaan and Moesstraat" and "as a result of the loss of shops, the area becomes less attractive to live in". However, it adds that "these advantages as well as disadvantages can be in fact better" and that these are just a "possible trend". It then asks to choose between two possibilities, that is, "Noorderplantsoen car-free" and "Noorderplantsoen open". 1,100 questionnaires were sent, and 268 were returned. Among the respondents, 54 (20.1 %) supported the closure, while 211 (78.7 %) opposed it. Based on this result, Damstra concluded that "the majority of residents find that the situation must remain as it is", and the *Gezinsbode* carried the headline, "Neighbourhood not happy with car-free Noorderplantsoen".

In Noorderplantsoenbuurt, however, the neighbourhood committee (neighbourhood association since October 1983) had consistently pressed the municipality to close the park to cars since the 1970s. When the Plan Traffic and Transport was being prepared, it repeatedly expressed its support for closing the park. It integrated the closure of the park into the neighbourhood traffic plan, which it drafted in 1982. In response to the Discussion Plan Intermediate Step, Rob van Vliet, who had been the chairman of the neighbourhood committee, submitted a written opinion with 123 signatures of residents, which agreed to close the park as proposed in the plan. He points out the fact that "each resident of the northern neighbourhoods has only 5 m² of parks, while, for example, each resident of Bedum has as much as 60 m² of parks within walking distance". Bedum is a suburban town in the north of Groningen. He finds it unacceptable that "residents of the northern neighbourhoods see their already small parks spoiled by car traffic of commuters from, for example, Bedum". For these commuters, according to him, there is a sufficient alternative route, that is, an "expensive ring road". In addition, although "Noorderplantsoen is potentially a very appropriate bicycle route", it now forces cyclists to share the narrow road way with heavy car traffic and is, as a result, "extremely dangerous for cyclists", he says. He also refutes each "unfounded anxiety" about the closure. The possible shift of through traffic to surrounding roads "must and can be regulated in the neighbourhood traffic plans". Concerning the effect on shops on Kerklaan and Moesstraat, he refers to the investigation by the Interval, as shopkeepers did. However, he rather pays attention to the fact that those drivers from outside the

neighbourhood, who account for 11 % of sales, are "not through traffic but customers who drive specifically to those shops to do their shopping there", and argues that, for these customers, sufficient alternative routes are available even if the park is closed. Furthermore, he points out the possibility that customers by bicycle might rather increase, because the route through Noorderplantsoen can be improved for cyclists. Finally, he casts a strong doubt on the argument that heavy car traffic currently prevents crime in the park, and argues that the "preventive effect"¹¹¹ of bicycle traffic is bigger.

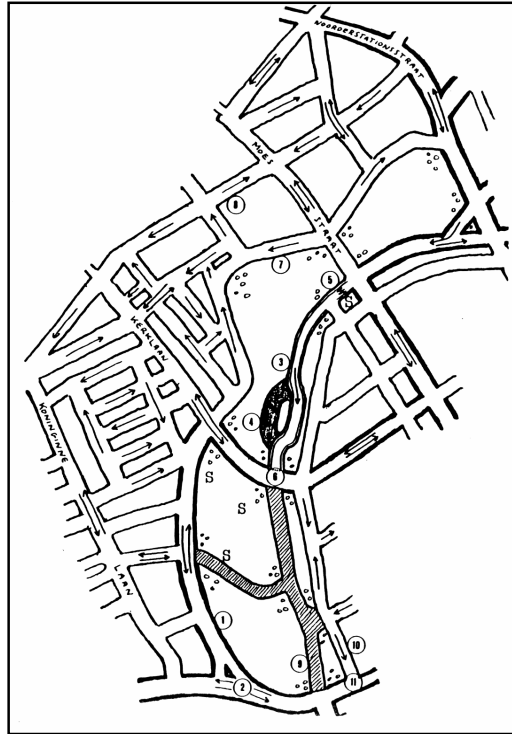


Figure 15: The compromise plan by Noorderplantsoenbuurt

The Neighbourhood Association Noorderplantsoenbuurt, whose executive Van Vliet joined, made a "compromise plan with which businesspeople and residents within the executive of the neighbourhood association agree", taking into account the investigation by the Interval, and submitted it to the B&W in August 1984 (Figure 15). The plan proposes one-way traffic in a southerly direction on Kruissingel, giving up closing it to keep accessibility to Kerklaan, and allocates the "neighbourhood opening function" to Oranjesingel without cutting it. In exchange for leaving Kruissingel open, it argues for closing Leliesingel including its part in the south of Grote Leliestraat. Although residents did the best to integrate the interests of shopkeepers, the United Businesspeople of Kerklaan¹¹² flatly dismissed this plan, saying that "principles of businesspeople are basically different from those of residents", and insisted that "the situation in Noorderplantsoen must remain as it is now"¹¹³. The neighbourhood association presented this plan to other neighbourhood organisations. Oranjebuurt

replied that, "based on this plan, Oranjesingel would still attract too much through traffic"¹¹⁴. Moreover, it was a basic assumption for Oranjebuurt that Kruissingel must be also closed, if Leliesingel was closed. Also in this respect, this plan must have been unacceptable for Oranjebuurt. Because Hortusbuurt "completely rejected" even the Discussion Plan, which left open the southern section of Leliesingel, it was inevitable that this neighbourhood rejected the proposal by Noorderplantsoenbuurt.

The Neighbourhood Association Noorderplantsoenbuurt, in its second written opinion, mentioned the questionnaire conducted by Damstra and others, and criticised this as "not representative for the neighbourhood and, in addition, highly suggestive"¹¹⁵. However, according to the above article in Gezinsbode, this questionnaire seems not so "suggestive". Moreover, this neighbourhood association itself had never conducted a questionnaire about Noorderplantsoen.

Neighbourhood organisations in the planning area formed a federation, United Residents' Organisations Northern Neighbourhoods¹¹⁶, and formulated a "joint position on main points" of the Discussion Plan, which was submitted to the B&W. In this, the federation demands to close Noorderplantsoen under following conditions:

- keeping Leliesingel in the south of Grote Leliestraat open for cars in both directions;
- keeping Oranjesingel open for cars in both directions;
- cutting the route Grachtstraat - Noorderbuitensingel;
- cutting the route Tuinbouwstraat - Kerklaan in a westerly direction.¹¹⁷

Among those "additional measures" demanded by the Working Group Traffic Oranjebuurt, the federation accepts it as a joint position to make Prinsesseweg unattractive to through traffic and introduce a speed limit of 30 km/h, although these measures are not included in the above conditions. However, it lists it as a separate position of Oranjebuurt to enforce one-way traffic on Nassaulaan and no right turn at the intersection of Kerklaan and Oranjesingel. In addition, it does not mention measures that should be taken for Kruissingel. These problems must originate from the differences of opinion between Noorderplantsoenbuurt and Oranjebuurt. It is also clear that Hortusbuurt cannot agree with the above measure for Leliesingel.

In sum, there had been indeed not a few residents in Noorderplantsoenbuurt who supported the closure of Noorderplantsoen. However, they could not prove that their view was widely supported by residents as well as shopkeepers.

Responses from residents of Sub-area III were overwhelmingly related to Rodeweg. Residents and their organisations on Rodeweg and adjacent Hunzestraat and Fivelstraat argued that, while a decision on this issue had been postponed, unfavourable phenomena had already emerged, such as "delay in major repairs, undesirable long vacancy, and so on"¹¹⁸. They urged the B&W to quickly choose the alternative that did not involve Rodeweg, that is, MODEL II or trace 0.

Concerning measures against through traffic on Sumatrалаан and Kapteynlaan, which the municipality had related to measures for Rodeweg, residents had argued for introducing one-way traffic converging on Korreweg. This corresponds with (a) among the alternatives proposed in the Discussion Plan, to which the plan did not give a preference. However, neither residents nor their organisations submitted any written opinions. That is why, Zunderdorp stated that "we have heard nothing, and therefore we presume that problems have been solved. That makes the demolition of Rodeweg less necessary"¹¹⁹. The above federation of neighbourhood organisations demanded to choose trace 0, and, on Sumatrалаан and Kapteynlaan, ban not through traffic as a whole but "freight traffic beyond a tonnage stipulated later"¹²⁰.

While residents and their organisations around Korreweg did not submit written opinions about this road either, only two individuals submitted opinions about the closure of Korrebrug, with one supporting and another opposing it. The opponent pointed out the "importance of keeping shops for many elderly people in this neighbourhood"¹²¹. The federation of neighbourhood organisations did not mention Korreweg, and, concerning Korrebrug, put forward the idea of, without closing it, placing poles on the road on the left across the bridge in order to block through traffic toward Winsum and Bedum. On the other hand, the Working Group Traffic Beijum¹²² pressed for closing Korrebrug to cars, because this bridge was situated on the "main bicycle route" connecting Beijum with the inner city. According to it, an alleged decline in sales on Korreweg and Oosterhamriklaan "stems from rather the cooker of demagoguery than realism". Most of businesses on Ulgersmaweg were not retail, and sufficient alternative routes to Korrebrug were available for them, it argued. Concerning small number of retail shops there, it justified the closure by saying that "they settled there while it was clear that there was a considerable chance that Korrebrug could be affected by the change of its function"¹²³. This working group in Beijum, which is outside the planning area, turned out to be the only neighbourhood organisation that submitted a written opinion that clearly supported measures against through traffic in Sub-area III.

The results of the two public hearings, which were held in June 1984, precisely reflected the above responses from residents. At these hearings, while shopkeepers in the Shopping Centre Paddepoel or on Nieuwe Ebbingestraat repeatedly opposed the closure of Noorderplantsoen and Korrebrug and urged to refrain from measures until the ring roads were completed, residents hardly expressed their support for those measures against through traffic. For example, at the second hearing, the member of the executive of the Neighbourhood Association Noorderplantsoenbuurt, Jan van den Berg, presented the "compromise plan" that "Residents and businesses have made together"¹²⁴. Immediately, however, shopkeepers on Kerklaan insisted on keeping Noorderplantsoen open, and residents of Oranjebuurt and Hortusbuurt put forward anxiety one after another about the shift of through traffic. At the first hearing, the representative of the Residents' Committee Biltonplein¹²⁵, which is along Sumatrалаан,

emphasised that causing a nuisance was not car traffic as a whole but freight traffic, saying that "it already means a remarkable improvement for residents, if heavy freight traffic is kept out of Sumatrалаan and Kapteynlaan", and asked for "A measure with which accessibility to businesses is not affected"¹²⁶. Based on these results, the KNOV, whose representative attended the hearings, stated in its written opinion that "residents of the northern neighbourhoods are convinced of the seriousness of these effects" and that "there would be no great differences between residents and businesspeople"¹²⁷. In addition, the "action meeting" on August 29th was attended by "representatives of the threatened streets and neighbourhoods"¹²⁸ as well as businesspeople, according to the Nieuwsblad.

4.3 Citizens' organisations

Among citizens' organisations, those advocating the interests of cyclists, pedestrians and bus passengers separately submitted written opinions about the Discussion Plan Intermediate Step.

The ENFB first of all regards the whole plan as placing "great emphasis on accessibility by car", and argues that "it refrains from taking measures that can make sure that the expensive ring road system is optimally used". Successively, the ENFB puts forward its views on each proposal. Its opinions about Sub-area I were after all hardly accepted by the Discussion Plan. It finds it "unacceptable that the municipality would take no measures to keep through traffic out of the neighbourhoods Selwerd and Paddepoel". It particularly points out the "overcapacity" of some of the neighbourhood opening roads, such as Zonnelaan, which have four lanes, and presses for narrowing these roads to two lanes. It is also "to a great extent disappointed that the Plan Intermediate Step has given up redesigning Zonnelaan near the Shopping Centre Paddepoel". The ENFB regards it as "extremely urgent" to close Noorderplantsoen, including the southern part of Leliesingel, while it asks for "effective measures to prevent through traffic in the adjacent neighbourhoods". It is also "precisely normal" to close Korrebrug, and with regard to the effect on shops on Korreweg, the ENFB points out the possibility that an increase in bicycle traffic would rather lead to an increase in sales, and suggests placing parking facilities for bicycles in front of shops there. Sumatrалаan and Kapteynlaan should be designated as a "residential street, with, if necessary, a limited function for opening the neighbourhood". If these roads are given the neighbourhood opening function, as proposed in the Discussion Plan, then the "inner ring"¹²⁹ with heavy through traffic would remain between Petrus Campersingel and Eikenlaan, and, according to the ENFB, this is "completely contrary to all the objectives of the municipal traffic policy up to now"¹³⁰.

The ENFB commissioned the traffic engineer B. Miedema to examine the "extensive report" published by the KNOV, and submitted the result to the B&W as its second written opinion. According to Miedema, the report exaggerates the negative effects of the Discussion Plan, through, for example, making an unrealistic assumption that all

drivers that come to a particular shop through routes that would be cut do not come any more after those routes are cut, and they do not turn to any other shops. He concludes that this report by KNOV "cannot be regarded as a serious attempt to provide more insight into the results of the traffic plans for the businesspeople in the northern neighbourhoods"¹³¹.

The association of pedestrians, VBV, directed its criticism mainly at the arguments put forward by the B&W concerning the "OBJECTIVE OF THE PLAN". First of all, it refutes the standpoint that the objective of a traffic policy is to meet traffic demand regardless of traffic modes:

Meeting traffic demand of car traffic has negative side effects that must be prevented as much as possible. That is why, we must discuss this traffic demand within the existing neighbourhoods. On the other hand, it can, not on balance but by definition, contribute to the public interests to meet traffic demand of vulnerable traffic participants.

A "complicated route" is "mostly no problem" for residents to reach home, and the VBV also denies the argument that the general economic development has put an end to the threat of car traffic, because "accidents have again increased last year". In addition, like the ENFB, it criticises the fact that Sumatrалаan and Kapteynlaan are "now raised to neighbourhood opening roads"¹³², although these roads were taken from the neighbourhood opening structure with wavy lines in the Discussion Plan Traffic and Transport. The ROVER regrets that "so much emphasis has been placed on car traffic", and asks for "influencing the choice of traffic modes in favour of buss and slow traffic"¹³³.

So, these three organisations submitted written opinions that were squarely contrary to those by business organisations. As long as the Discussion Plan is concerned, however, no other action was reported in relation to the municipality nor the public. Also at the public hearings, these three organisations were rather silent, judging from the minutes, while "it was yesterday noticeable that the city's businesspeople increasingly better organise themselves in this sort of procedures"¹³⁴ and they repeatedly expressed their opinions, as we have seen.

4.4 Political parties

Among political parties, the VVD submitted a written opinion. This party first of all brings forward its basic standpoint that it has negative effects on economy to restrain car traffic:

Reducing traffic movements means therefore reducing economic movements, which means a deterioration of the economic structure and a danger for employment in all sectors.¹³⁵

Concerning Noorderplantsoen, it argues for closing it only to freight traffic, except for freight traffic with its destination near the park. While both Herman Colleniusbrug and Korrebrug should be kept open for cars in both directions, a bridge for bicycles should be built next to the former and the existing sidewalks on the latter should be redesigned

as bike lanes, the party says. In conclusion, like the business organisations, it insists that the ring roads should be first completed.

The municipal council dealt with the Discussion Plan on October 8th, 1984. Here, the GPV argued that "The controversial Plan Intermediate Step can be better withdrawn, at least until the ring road system is entirely in service"¹³⁶. On the other hand, the PPR and PSP pressed for implementing measures proposed in the plan, and particularly concerning Noorderplantsoen, the PSP urged the B&W to close it, referring to the fact that this project was promised in the election program of the PvdA.

Within the PvdA, the Working Group VROV¹³⁷ held a "theme meeting" about the Discussion Plan on June 26th, 1984. At this meeting, which was attended by 16 party members, "various participants" expressed a "feeling that the traffic policy of the PvdA has lost progressiveness", and this was particularly the case with measures for Sub-area I. On the other hand, measures for other sub-areas were supported. Particularly, concerning Noorderplantsoen, "All participants were of the opinion that it is now high time Noorderplantsoen was closed to car traffic", and also concerning Korrebrug, "Unanimous agreement with the plan to close this bridge to car traffic"¹³⁸ was confirmed.

Afterwards, however, facing strong opposition from the business community, the PvdA leaders, to be precise, *wethouders* and some of councillors, started to show a negative attitude to the closure of these two routes. Although the B&W at first scheduled the decision by the municipal council for October 1984, it could not even present its proposal to the council within 1984. On March 5th, 1985, the VROV again held a "theme evening" about the Discussion Plan. This meeting was attended by 19 party members, among whom were "Rein Zunderdorp, councillors, working group members and district team members". Here, opposition was expressed to closing Korrebrug and Noorderplantsoen, although by the minority. The "majority" supported the "complete closure of Korrebrug", because, in their view, the "safety of cyclists on the bridge" was more important than a "possible decline in sales of shops on Korreweg or Ulgersmaweg". However, the "minority" chose the "compromise (limited car traffic, regulated with traffic signals)". While 12 attendees among 19 argued for "making Noorderplantsoen completely car-free", 4 insisted on "keeping Leliesingel completely open in a northerly direction because of "insufficient public support for the complete car-free park, not only among businesspeople but also among residents". The proponents of the car-free park replied that "there is actually sufficient public support" among residents of surrounding neighbourhoods, and moreover pointed out the fact that "the election program is abundantly clear on this point". The remaining three supported the "compromise plan"¹³⁹ proposed by the neighbourhood association, in which Kruissingel was kept open in a southerly direction.

The same day as this theme evening, the CDA, which had joined the B&W since 1982,

held a general member meeting about the Discussion Plan. At this meeting, the party group raised an objection about closing Korrebrug and Noorderplantsoen, and argued for not taking measures for Sumatrалаан and Kapteynlaan before the ring road system was completed. It concluded that "the college must come up with more alternatives so that a well considered choice can be made"¹⁴⁰.

5. The Compromise Proposal

5.1 The Compromise Proposal

On March 7th, that is, two days after the above meetings of the VROV and CDA, the B&W, with PvdA *wethouders* Gietema and Bert Barmentloo being absent, decided the revision of the Discussion Plan, Compromise Proposal¹⁴¹, as a "temporary guideline for consultations with the interest groups"¹⁴².

As long as Sub-area I is concerned, this proposal succeeds the Discussion Plan as it is. It also succeeds the Discussion Plan with regard to the "neighbourhood opening structure" for Sub-area II. Concerning "measures" for this area, however, it drastically modifies the original plan. That is, it does not close any more Noorderplantsoen to cars, except for lorries, but instead proposes one-way traffic in a northerly direction. The concrete measures for Leliesingel and Kruissingel are as follows:

- one-way traffic for (passenger) cars in a northerly direction;
- two safe bike lanes;
- measures against too fast car traffic;
- narrowing the road way so that (freight) car traffic > 2.25 metres wide must follow another route;
- making the western half of the "roundabout" car-free.

On the other hand, the proposal maintains the measure of introducing one-way traffic in a northerly direction on Herman Colleniusbrug. In response to anxiety among residents about the shift of through traffic, it comes up with the measure of introducing one-way traffic in a northerly direction on Oranjesingel and Koninginnelaan in the south of Nassaulaan. In addition, in order to lead through traffic to the western ring road well ahead of this area, it suggests an idea of "diverting the main flow of traffic in a northerly direction to Hoendiep and A-weg"¹⁴³ through reconstructing Westerhaven.

In relation to Sub-area III, the proposal clearly gives up integrating Rodeweg into the accessibility route, and therefore chooses so-called trace 0. As "Preconditions" for this choice, while it argues for a "smooth connection from and to Boterdiep" and "preventing through car traffic in a southerly direction from making too much use of Nieuwe Ebbingestraat and Nieuwe Boteringestraat", it abandons the "square version"¹⁴⁴ as illustrated in Figure 14. The B&W will look for a "solution that is as adequate" as the original plan but "meets the wishes of shopkeepers", according to the proposal. It suggests that the municipality should "not close Kapteynlaan and Sumatrалаan to (passenger) car traffic" and examine measures for these roads after the eastern ring road, that is, the whole ring road system, is completed. The condition for this is that "freight traffic will be (partly) excluded (with a height or width limit that can be physically forced), if the development is not satisfactory". Finally, it also gives up closing Korrebrug to passenger cars, and suggests that the road way on the bridge should be narrowed to one-lane, where two-way traffic be allowed with traffic signals, and instead bike lanes be introduced. Freight traffic should be excluded with a "physical width limit"¹⁴⁵.

In terms of the two meetings of the PvdA and CDA, which were held just before the Compromise Proposal was decided, the proposal was utterly contrary to the wishes of the majority expressed at the former, and consistent with the opinions of the party group at the latter. As the reason for such a revision, Zunderdorp argued that "the plans have met to an absolutely overwhelming degree with negative reactions during the participation round"¹⁴⁶. Toward his own party, he emphasised that particularly residents did not support measures proposed in the Discussion Plan. That is, "Residents' groups obviously did not insist so much as in the past on measures that made through traffic really impossible", and "it is clear from the beginning that the majority that might be still found in the municipal council does not exist any more among the public"¹⁴⁷.

5.2 Public support

Indeed, businesspeople and their organisations submitted many written opinions opposing the Discussion Plan, and expressed opposition repeatedly at the two public hearings. However, this just means that businesspeople, that is, a part of citizens, were represented by various organisations again and again, and they aggressively attended the public hearings and voiced their opinions. These organisations not only spoke for businesspeople and other organisations, but also actually overlapped personally as well as organisationally. The Businesspeople's Consultation Traffic Structure Groningen-north was a federation of individual business organisations in the planning area, while the Consultative Body Small and Medium-sized Business consisted of representatives of the KvK, KNOV, NCOV, and so on. Furthermore, the chairman of the Council Shopping Centre Paddepoel, Van Loenen, attended a consultation with the municipality about the Compromise Proposal as representative of the KNOV, and also joined the above consultative body as representative of the KNOV. The representative of the Businesspeople's Club Nieuwe Ebbingestraat, Oosterhof, read out the "declaration" of the street at the public hearing, while he also attended a consultation about the Compromise Proposal as representative of the NCOV, and again joined the consultative body as representative of the NCOV. That is why, opinions given by these organisations were necessarily almost utterly the same, as we have seen.

On the other hand, responses from residents were seemingly consistent with those from the business community. For example, those who supported the closure of Noorderplantsoen were limited in terms of area as well as number, and rather the overwhelming majority seemed to oppose it. However, the Discussion Plan hardly proposed measures to prevent through traffic from shifting to surrounding streets, and therefore there was no guarantee that even the estimation shown in Table 1 could be achieved. In addition, shopkeepers cried out that their shops would fail, and even a possible increase in crime was alleged. If the closure of the park was put to the vote among residents under such a situation, the majority would surely oppose it. However, while businesspeople and their organisations opposed the closure itself, residents were afraid of possible problems caused by the closure. They had by no means become

tolerant about through traffic, as the Discussion Plan or Zunderdorp argued. In fact, they opposed or were not enthusiastic about the closure for fear of an increase in through traffic on their streets. This is clear from those thorough measures against through traffic that were proposed by the Working Group Traffic Oranjebuurt. Residents still regarded through traffic as seriously undermining residential environment, and pressed for taking drastic measures against it.

Also concerning Sumatrалаan and Kapteynlaan, and Korrebrug, residents put forward opinions rather asking for maintaining through traffic of passenger cars. At least until a few years before, however, they had pressed for measures against through traffic as a whole, as mentioned earlier. Consideration for residents around Rodeweg or anxiety about alleged closure of shops could have played a role in softening their opinions. On the other hand, residents of Beijum argued for closing Korrebrug in a straightforward manner.

Although the action by the ENFB or ROVER was limited, it was comprehensibly impossible for them to conduct a campaign as aggressive as that by business organisations in terms of human and financial resources. They, however, were actually the only citizens' organisations in Groningen that had advocated the interests of a huge number of pedestrians, cyclists and bus passengers.

That is why, it was obviously too simplistic to conclude that there was no public support for measures against through traffic only based on the superficial responses from the public. On the other hand, the PvdA of Groningen had consistently published election programs since 1974 that argued for keeping through traffic out of residential neighbourhoods, and maintained its position as the dominant party in the municipal council. Although it lost one seat at the latest election in 1982, it still won 15 seats of 39 in total, and the PPR and PSP, both of which had also insisted on closing Noorderplantsoen, respectively increased by one seat to two seats. Therefore, the majority of residents could have supported those measures such as the closure of Noorderplantsoen and Korrebrug, if the B&W had sincerely dealt with their anxiety about through traffic or negative effects on shops. At least, it was wrong to say, like Zunderdorp, that "it is clear from the beginning that the majority (...) does not exist any more among the public".

On the other hand, it would have been, indeed "from the beginning", impossible to get support for those measures from businesspeople and their organisations. This is inevitable, however, because, as we can see in their opinions, their arguments were fundamentally incompatible with the principles of the traffic policy of the PvdA. For example, the NCOV professed that restraining car traffic was against the public interests. Shopkeepers in the Shopping Centre Paddepoel regarded it as a problem that through traffic had decreased after the opening of the northern ring road. So, it was clear that they would continue to oppose any measures against, what they called,

"inter-neighbourhood connections"¹⁴⁸, even if through traffic did not decrease after the ring road system was completed. Shopkeepers on Nieuwe Ebbingestraat also opposed the measure that would reduce through traffic on their street, although it had been a consistent policy for the PvdA since the 1970s to make shopping streets in and around the inner city attractive to pedestrians. While businesspeople and their organisations had argued that all those measures that prevented through traffic were "fatal" or "disastrous" for business, the PvdA had argued for preventing through traffic, because the party found those measures not fatal or disastrous for business. In fact, the VCP has not caused such serious effects. In addition, Zunderdorp himself criticised the prediction by the KNOV as "based on a quicksand"¹⁴⁹ in September 1984. On the other hand, because there were such fundamental differences of opinion, the PvdA could deviate from its principles, if it devoted itself to getting support from the business community.

However, the PvdA leaders had, without taking into account the above mentioned essential issues, virtually set it as their principal goal in planning to gain the approval of the well-organised and vocal business community. Such an attitude could already be observed in the Discussion Plan, and has become still more explicit in the Compromise Proposal. Concerning effects on business of measures against through traffic, Zunderdorp had accepted without foundation the arguments made by shopkeepers in his explanation to his party about the Compromise Proposal:

In order to better estimate the possible effects on sales of businesses, not only the municipality but also the business community has conducted investigations. Although the actual effects are always difficult to predict and the willingness of shopkeepers to adapt plays a role, it must still be confirmed that the possibility of a considerable decline in sales is great in some cases. As a result, the level of neighbourhood facilities can be negatively influenced.¹⁵⁰

Therefore, "the Compromise Proposal must respond as much as possible to" the "anxiety that the interests of businesses are overlooked"¹⁵¹, he said. Such an attitude among the PvdA leaders had been getting more and more recognisable in the process of proceeding from the Compromise Proposal to the definitive proposal to the municipal council.

5.3 Consultations about the Compromise Proposal

The municipality did not make the Compromise Proposal public, but sent it to the "banded consultation partners"¹⁵² as the "confidential information"¹⁵³, and held a series of meetings with them to discuss the proposal, with Zunderdorp present. Among them, the meetings with citizens' organisations and neighbourhood organisations were arranged once for each. The former was held on April 22nd, 1985, with representatives of the ENFB, ROVER and VBV. Here, these three organisations expressed fierce anger at the Compromise Proposal. "The Compromise Proposal deviates so thoroughly from the original proposal and surely from the original principles" that their opinions about the Discussion Plan seemed not to have been heard, and this proposal was a "change in policy" that the PvdA had pursued, they insisted. They even cast a doubt on the

significance of consulting with the municipality, now that "the *college* goes in a so wrong direction with this proposal". Concerning concrete measures, the proposal for Korrebrug was "unnecessarily complicated and expensive". The proposal for Sumatrалаan and Kapteynlaan did "not go far enough". Noorderplantsoen must be closed as originally proposed, they argued. Zunderdorp replied that the closure of Korrebrug and Noorderplantsoen had "acquired a symbolic character", indicating that the closure itself did not have to be pursued. In response, these organisations insisted that "A peaceful park and safe bicycle routes are no symbols but important links"¹⁵⁴.

The meeting with neighbourhood organisations was held on May 3rd, and representatives from seven neighbourhoods attended. However, no one attended from Oranjebuurt "because of misunderstanding". Although the municipality promised here that it would talk to the neighbourhood organisation of Oranjebuurt separately, no meeting had been after all arranged for it, as long as the Compromise Proposal itself is concerned. At the meeting on May 3rd, the representative from Noorderplantsoenbuurt presented the compromise plan that the neighbourhood association had made, and argued that the "benefit of a car-free park" was "overwhelming". On the contrary, the representative from Hortusbuurt insisted that the "disadvantages of car-free Noorderplantsoen" were "too great". He agreed with those measures proposed in the Compromise Proposal, while he disagreed with the plan by Noorderplantsoenbuurt. The representative from Biltonplein stressed here again that "the problem around Sumatrалаan and Kapteynlaan particularly concentrates on freight traffic", and, also concerning freight traffic, she argued that "an absolute ban against freight traffic does not have to be introduced, if discouraging measures are also effective". The representative from West-Indischebuurt, which is situated to the west of Korrebrug, agreed with those measures for the bridge proposed in the Compromise Proposal, because "Korrebrug must remain open for car traffic"¹⁵⁵. That is why, it seems that the Compromise Proposal got support from neighbourhood organisations, except for Noorderplantsoenbuurt. In addition, neither citizens' organisations nor neighbourhood organisations, including Oranjebuurt, submitted written opinions about the Compromise Plan itself.

On the other hand, the municipality repeatedly arranged meetings with business organisations, and each of these organisations again submitted written opinions. Through these opportunities, they first of all appreciated the Compromise Proposal, on the ground that it certainly took into account their objections to the Discussion Plan:

First of all, we express our appreciation for the fact that you prove with the above mentioned Compromise Proposal that you understand the serious economic results of those measures proposed in the Plan Intermediate Step. (KvK)¹⁵⁶

it is clear from the Compromise Proposal that you have understood the problems that would have developed for lots of businesses and the level of commercial facilities, if the proposals from the Intermediate Step had been adhered to as they were. The business community has been clearly able to acquire the impression from the Compromise Proposal that you want to deal with the problems that can be objectively expected. (Consultative Body Small and Medium-sized Business)¹⁵⁷

With pleasure, we add to this that we have appreciated to a high degree your proving in the Compromise Proposal that you understand those problems outlined by us that would develop, if those measures proposed in the Plan Intermediate Step were introduced. (Cooperative Association of Owners in the Shopping Centre De Paddepoel)¹⁵⁸

They also appreciated the procedure around the Compromise Proposal. For example, at the meeting with the municipality on May 8th, the KvK expressed its satisfaction with the fact that "a climate for consultation with the *wethouder* has developed about the traffic structure in Groningen-north"¹⁵⁹. In its written opinion, the Consultative Body Small and Medium-sized Business also expressed its appreciation, because "you amply give an opportunity to respond to your traffic plan for the northern neighbourhoods particularly to the business community"¹⁶⁰.

Expressing these appreciations, business organisations still pressed for suspending remaining measures against through traffic. Concerning one-way traffic on Noorderplantsoen and Herman Colleniusbrug, they repeatedly quoted the investigation by the CIMK on the effects of the Compromise Proposal, which the KvK had commissioned. According to this investigation, these two measures would cause a decline of 6 to 40 % in sales, depending on location. Particularly the proposal for Noorderplantsoen indeed maintained the accessibility to the surrounding area from the south, argued the KvK in its written opinion, but the route to leave this area, that is, Kerklaan → Oranjesingel → Nassaulaan, was "so complicated that we fear a remarkable decline in visits by car to this area"¹⁶¹. In addition, business organisations insisted that these two one-way restrictions would have a serious effect on freight traffic, and pressed for keeping these routes open in both directions for lorries as well as for passenger cars. Although the Compromise Proposal abandoned the "square version" at the northern entrance to Nieuwe Ebbingestraat, business organisations raised an objection to the objective itself such as "smooth connection from and to Boterdiep". Because "through traffic must maintain a free choice between going to Boterdiep and Nieuwe Ebbingestraat"¹⁶², they insisted on "placing no obstacles, in whatever form, at the intersection of Boteringesingel and Nieuwe Ebbingestraat"¹⁶³.

According to the Compromise Proposal, the municipality would "not close Kapteynlaan and Sumatrалаan to (passenger) car traffic". Interpreted literally, this sentence just gives up completely cutting as well as pedestrianising these two roads. In terms of the alternatives in the Discussion Plan, it excludes only the measure (a). That is why, in the consultation between the Shopping Centre Paddepoel and the municipality on April 22nd, representatives of the shopping centre asked to make this sentence "specific" as follows:

The route Eikenlaan - Asingastraat - Sumatrалаan - Kapteynlaan remains open for car traffic in both directions.

They wanted to keep this route as the "inner ring" even after the ring road system was completed. At least when the B&W proposed the Discussion Plan, it regarded it as a

problem that this route was used as such. However, the representative ("coordinator") of the municipality, F. Overbeek, accepted this stretched interpretation, saying that "that is completely the intention". With this statement, "a great concern to the Shopping Centre Paddepoel was removed"¹⁶⁴, said the representatives of the shopping centre. Subsequently, various business organisations underscored this stretched interpretation again and again in their written opinions. Furthermore, the Working Group Transport Organisations insisted on maintaining this inner ring even for freight traffic:

With approval, we confirm that the policy of the *college van Burgemeester en Wethouders* is aimed at keeping the connection Petrus Campersingel - Kapteynlaan - Sumatrалаan - Asingastraat - Eikenlaan open in both directions for car traffic. In our view, this inter-neighbourhood connection also forms an extremely important link for service freight traffic and bringing goods in and out of businesses¹⁶⁵

And after all, all these organisations pressed for not taking decisions not only on Sumatrалаan and Kapteynlaan but also on all other places until the ring road system was completed. In addition, the Consultative Body Small and Medium-sized Business, in its written opinion, urged the B&W to "conduct a bottleneck-analysis of the existing ring roads", and "improve the confirmed bottlenecks in the short term". According to this organisation, because it would be "of direct influence on the two most important traffic situations in your Compromise Proposal, that is, Herman Colleniusbrug and Noorderplantsoen" to eliminate these bottlenecks and complete the ring roads, "no thorough traffic measures would be necessary any more". Successively, referring to the reconstruction of Westerhaven and the northern entrance to Nieuwe Ebbingestraat, the organisation found it unacceptable that this reconstruction "would be carried out in such a manner that the shopping concentrations on Westersingel and Nieuwe Ebbingestraat become less accessible for customers by car"¹⁶⁶. However, the reconstruction of Westerhaven was planned to lead through traffic to the western ring road. That is why, while this consultative body, which all of the major business organisations joined, urged to improve the ring roads, it opposed a measure to facilitate their use. As mentioned earlier related to shopkeepers in the Shopping Centre Paddepoel, the business community did not hope that the completion of the ring roads would reduce through traffic, but rather feared that it might reduce through traffic. Therefore, it was clear that it would continue to oppose measures against through traffic, even if through traffic did not decrease after the completion of the ring roads. Such a possibility can be well observed in the following quotation from a written opinion submitted by the KvK:

Only after we know the effect of the opening of the complete ring road system, we can see if additional traffic measures are still necessary. Apart from this, however, mutual accessibility of various neighbourhoods via inter-neighbourhood connections remains an essential precondition for a livable and workable city.¹⁶⁷

5.4 A backlash from within the PvdA

Although the Compromise Proposal was sent to the "banded consultation partners" and meetings were arranged for them, the intraparty organisations of the PvdA were not informed of this proposal. Members of the VROV and district teams¹⁶⁸ concerned got

acquainted with the proposal "through canals outside the party", and were surprised with its content, which "deviates almost completely from the results of the discussion at the theme evening" and "seems to be intended only for businesspeople". On April 16th, they published a long written opinion¹⁶⁹ addressed to the party members, with names of 13 party members including the chairman of the VROV, Rob van Vliet¹⁷⁰. In this, they first of all argue that they discussed the "wrong document" at the theme evening on March 5, and criticise Zunderdorp for not presenting the draft of the Compromise Proposal, which the municipal Secretary-Division of Urban Planning¹⁷¹ had already prepared in February. Successively, they particularly press for two projects in the Discussion Plan, that is, the closure of Korrebrug and Noorderplantsoen. With regard to the former, they point out that "the traffic space has been in recent years considerably expanded mainly for car traffic" in Groningen-north, thanks to the northern and eastern ring roads, and so on, and therefore it is now necessary to improve the "competitiveness" in favour of bicycles. With those measures in the Compromise Proposal for this bridge, pedestrians and cyclists would be forced to wait long at the traffic signals, they say. One-way traffic in Noorderplantsoen, as put forward in the proposal, would only bring about a "difference between an absolutely great nuisance and a great nuisance", and therefore cannot lead to "strengthening the park and recreation function of Noorderplantsoen" at all. They also bring forward the "danger that cars would run harder" without oncoming traffic.

They refute precisely "Objections from Businesspeople" in a separate section. In relation to the closure of Korrebrug, they refer to the fact that drivers coming via Korrebrug account for less than 5 % of total sales of shops on Korreweg. They also, more generally, call attention to a "reverse effect"¹⁷² that measures against through traffic could have on shopping streets. That is, although "shopkeepers only talk about a possible decline in sales", insisting that "cars from outside the neighbourhood would not be able to come to their shops any more", customers who went shopping outside the neighbourhood might stay within the neighbourhood as a result of those measures. For example, if Korrebrug is closed to cars, "Residents of Korrewegwijk will relatively less frequently go shopping outside the neighbourhood, and thus spend more money within Korrewegwijk itself". Among businesses on Ulgersmaweg, there are only two that attract "normal customers", and, for freight traffic, there are "excellent alternative routes (Bedumerweg or Damsterdiep)" available, even if Korrebrug is closed. Customers of the two retail shops visit these shops to specifically shop there, and such customers could keep on coming through another route. Moreover, as Zunderdorp himself insisted, these shops were or could be informed of the plan with Korrebrug when they settled there, they argue.

In relation to the closure of Noorderplantsoen, they echo arguments put forward by residents of Noorderplantsoenbuurt. That is, customers of Kerklaan from outside the neighbourhood are those who "drive specifically to those shops to do their shopping there", and there is even a possibility that customers by bicycle could increase. In

addition, they argue that, because wholesale businesses have recently moved out from Noorderplantsoenbuurt and Oranjebuurt, problems for freight traffic "considerably decrease or have decreased". Because the municipality plans to build houses on the sites of these businesses, "an increase in sales will result for shopkeepers thanks to a municipal policy", according to them.

After responding to objections from business organisations, they criticise, in another section, their own party leaders who had claimed a lack of "Public Support for The Policy". In their view, the B&W hardly put forward counterarguments as above, and, as a result, "the opinions of businesspeople dominated the media". They particularly criticise *wethouder* of finance and economy Barmentloo for openly opposing those measures such as the closure of Noorderplantsoen as chairman of the Consultative Body Small and Medium-sized Business. In fact, the above written opinion by this organisation carries his signature. To the claim of lacking public support, they reply based on the election program. Referring to the traffic policy in the Municipal Program 82-86, which was quoted in Introduction, they state that "The chapter about traffic in our election program is particularly clear and concrete". "Partly thanks to this clear program, the PvdA won 16 seats¹⁷³", and "Therefore there is sufficient public support through this democratic process (see also the programs of small Lefts)". Finally, they urge the party leaders to stick to the election program, and again press for closing Korrebrug and Noorderplantsoen:

We think that the *college* and party group are fully bound to the election program, and that the proposals from the Intermediate Step, which are excellently founded, particularly those with regard to Korrebrug and Noorderplantsoen must be fully implemented.

5.5 MODEL 4

The Municipal Program 82-86 did not specifically mention Korrebrug, although it argued for facilitating bicycle traffic or increasing its safety in relation to cars. However, the closure of Noorderplantsoen had been explicitly advocated in the election programs since 1978. Pressed firmly to observe the election programs from within his own party, Zunderdorp, at least concerning Noorderplantsoen, could not help searching for a proposal that could meet conflicting demands of the business community and the party. At the meeting with the Action Committee Northern Neighbourhoods on May 3rd, an idea was put forward by the business side to solve this difficult problem. That is, the representative of the NCW-north/ VNO-north came up with a proposal to "introduce one-way traffic only on Leliesingel in a northerly direction (thus Kruissingel entirely open), and keep Oranjesingel open in both directions so that north-south traffic could then shift to Oranjesingel". About one-way traffic proposed in the Compromise Proposal, the business community had a complaint that the alternative route from the north to the south was too complicated, as seen in the written opinion by the KvK. The above proposal, which was later named the "circuit model"¹⁷⁴, was intended to meet this complaint, but as a matter of course unacceptable to residents of Oranjebuurt, because, as the proposal itself professed, existing through traffic in a southerly direction in the park just shifted to Oranjesingel. In this regard,

this proposal was worse for residents than not only the Compromise Proposal but also the Discussion Plan, which closed Kruissingel. However, in response to this proposal, the municipality made a counterproposal to "make Leliesingel completely car-free, on the condition that Oranjesingel could succeed the current function of Leliesingel and Kruissingel remains open in both directions". This was obviously still more unacceptable to residents of Oranjebuurt than the circuit model, and also unacceptable to residents of Hortusbuurt, because Oranjesingel could not function as an access to this neighbourhood. According to the minutes of this meeting, "they", that is, members of the action committee, "make it clear that they could also agree with" this counterproposal. However, "The NCOV distances itself from these new versions"¹⁷⁵.

Zuiderdorp decided to adopt this proposal, which met the election program, although very superficially, and seemed to be acceptable to the business community, into the "final proposal" to the municipal council, Decision-Making Plan Intermediate Step, and sent the intraparty organisations a memorandum¹⁷⁶ dated June 1st about this final proposal. In this memorandum, he argues that the final proposal must meet the following "preconditions":

- a. it stays within the objectives of the traffic policy of the election program and *collegeprogram* (...)
- b. it is acceptable to the majority of residents and the business community, whether this is difficult or not.

Indeed, "the various objectives can lead to incompatible conclusions", but it is important to "find the optimal compromise", and he puts forward the following final proposal. Concerning Sub-area I, it succeeds the Compromise Proposal, that is, the Discussion Plan. Concerning Sub-area III, it adopts the Compromise Proposal. Particularly in relation to Korrebrug, he mentions that "businesspeople will not (in an organised manner) oppose" those measures proposed in the Compromise Proposal, and Residents' Committee Korrewegwijk¹⁷⁷ also prefers these to closing it. On the other hand, concerning Noorderplantsoen in Sub-area II, he presents four models (Figure 16). MODEL 1 is the proposal in the Discussion Plan, MODEL 2 a compromise between measures proposed by Noorderplantsoenbuurt and those by Oranjebuurt, MODEL 3 one-way traffic in the Compromise Proposal, and MODEL 4 a new proposal to close Leliesingel, which was drafted in response to the discussion about the Compromise Proposal. In MODEL 4, "the neighbourhood opening function of Leliesingel is shifted to Oranjesingel (in both directions)". As a result, "there remains the possibility that a certain degree of through car traffic is relocated from Leliesingel to Oranjesingel (in both directions)". In order to minimise this shift of through traffic, "the other half of this possible through traffic route must not be too attractive". Concretely, through closing Kruissingel to freight traffic and introducing measures there to restrain the speed, the "actual neighbourhood opening function" is shifted to Kruisstraten and Nieuwe Boteringestraat. In addition, this model allows two-way traffic on one lane on Herman Colleniusbrug, like Korrebrug.

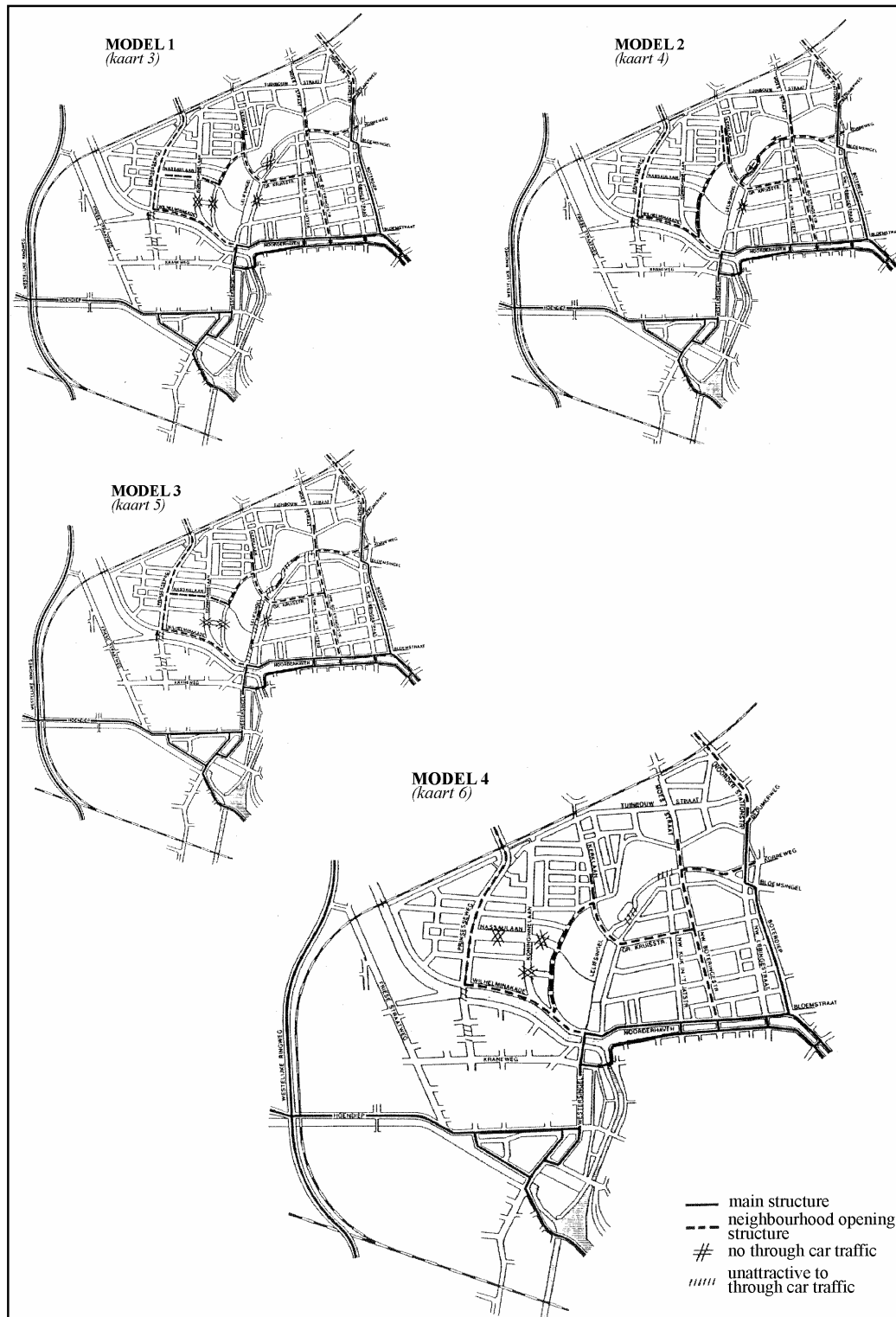


Figure 16: Four models for Noorderplantsoen and its environs

Among these four models, according to Zunderdorp, MODEL 1 and 2 "met with prohibitive objections among the organised business community", and MODEL 3 "would be a deviation from the election program". On the other hand, MODEL 4 "fits into the election program" and "the business community is prepared to accept this". He does not tell whether residents would accept this model, and instead refers to a written opinion with 249 signatures, which was submitted from Oranjebuurt just before, dated May 29th. In this, residents argue that they "got acquainted, with surprise, with the recent development around plans with Noorderplantsoen", and strongly oppose closing Leliesingel, because "traffic will find its way through the residential and recreational streets Oranjesingel, Koninginnelaan, Prinsesseweg and Nassaulaan"¹⁷⁸. According to Zunderdorp, residents "assume through traffic also on Nassaulaan, which is not necessary in MODEL 4". However, MODEL 4 just relocates through traffic, which was in the original idea guided through Nassaulaan, to Oranjesingel. In addition, this modification is for providing a smoother through traffic route, in response to opinions from the business community. Because Kruissingel is not closed to passenger cars, even the direct route Kruissingel - Kerklaan - Oranjesingel is retained in MODEL 4. That is why, there was no guarantee, at least concerning Oranjebuurt, that this model would be accepted by residents, but, "Considering all interests and in terms of the political strategy", Zunderdorp chooses MODEL 4. This final proposal would be submitted to the municipal council in September, according to his schedule.

The VROV discussed this memorandum on June 4th. It examined particularly proposals related to Noorderplantsoen and Korrebrug, and agreed with them, "given the developed situation around the Plan Intermediate Step". However, it made "some short comments" that should be taken into account by the party group and Zunderdorp. Concerning Noorderplantsoen, on Kruissingel, "measures will have to be taken for bicycle traffic, in combination with measures to restrain car traffic". In addition, these measures should be "temporary (but clear!)", so that, based on an "evaluation after about one year", further measures against car traffic, such as one-way traffic, could be introduced. Also concerning Korrebrug, measures should be first "only provisional", and "After half a year", if it became clear that the safety of bicycles was not improved, "then Korrebrug is closed to car traffic"¹⁷⁹, argued the VROV.

The local party bulletin of the PvdA, Onze Binding, for June reported the final proposal succinctly. Seeing this article, the Nieuwsblad dated June 15th revealed the content of the proposal as follows:

Two-way traffic on Herman Colleniusbrug and Korrebrug, and closing Noorderplantsoen to car traffic on Leliesingel. Kruissingel is made unattractive to through car traffic.

However, "Zunderdorp does not want to confirm that the definitive version of the proposal will include these elements", according to the Nieuwsblad. He said: "It could be, but I do not want to anticipate the decision by the *college*". On the other hand, the Nieuwsblad expected that this proposal "seems to be politically approved", if it was

actually introduced in the municipal council.

Given this development, residents of Oranjebuurt, who had been quiet about the Compromise Proposal, rapidly started to raise an objection. The above written opinion dated May 29th called upon Zunderdorp to arrange a meeting so that they could "explain precisely our stand point", and, in response, a meeting was held on June 12th, with Zunderdorp, Overbeek and four residents present. The residents pointed out that, although there were no houses on Leliesingel in the park, there were on Oranjesingel, and "The houses will crack with heavy traffic". They posed the question "which interests weigh heavier: those of residents directly adjacent to the park or those of groups who use the park very limitedly and incidentally"¹⁸⁰. In addition, seeing the Nieuwsblad dated June 15th, the Neighbourhood Association Oranjebuurt submitted a written opinion dated June 18th. According to this opinion, if this proposal "known as Z-plan and MODEL 4" is realised, "Oranjebuurt and particularly Oranjesingel will have to cope with much more traffic than now". Also in terms of improving the recreational function of the park, this model is a "bogus solution"¹⁸¹, the association insists. Because, as a result of an increase in traffic on Oranjesingel, "The access to the park (playgrounds, sandpit) is now extremely hampered for the people of the neighbourhood", and "Cars also run much more closely to the places where children play". The association proposes the following eight measures as an alternative:

1. Not closing Leliesingel, but making the road unattractive to through traffic with limited redesign.
2. Clearly discouraging through traffic well ahead of the area around Noorderplantsoen through providing reasonable alternatives. There is talk (according to Zunderdorp and Overbeek) that such a discouraging policy can reduce traffic by 50 %.
3. Introducing bike paths along Leliesingel.
4. Realising tunnels under or pedestrian bridges over Leliesingel.
5. Safe crossings (traffic signals, if necessary) on Prinsesseweg and abolishing the status of this road as the through street.
6. Maximum speed of 30 km/h in the whole neighbourhood.
7. Cutting Nassaulaan at the intersection with Koninginnelaan (...). At the same time, introducing a *woonerf* on Koninginnelaan between Wilhelminakade and Nassaulaan (...).
8. Safer Oranjesingel, in relation to existing recreation there and Nassauschool.

As seen above, while it opposes closing Leliesingel, the association presses for thorough measures against existing through traffic, which had annoyed the neighbourhood for long. Finally, it warns that deciding MODEL 4 "will, without doubt, arouse fierce action"¹⁸².

The parents' committee and staff of Nassauschool also submitted a written opinion dated the same day. They argue that, with MODEL 4, "most of traffic that uses Leliesingel will shift to Oranjesingel", and this is "extremely reprehensible" for the following reasons:

1. Nassauschool (growing and currently numbering about 200 pupils) is situated about 50 metres from Oranjesingel, which is already now extremely busy, and will become still more difficult than now for children to reach from a substantial catchment area of our school.
2. Nassauschool does not have its own gymnasium, and, during the summer, often uses

Noorderplantsoen for sports activities. This will become not only more difficult with poorer accessibility to the park but also more unpleasant: stinking exhaust from increasing car traffic on Oranjesingel does not facilitate the health of our children.

After proposing almost the same measures as those by the neighbourhood association, they finally again press for giving up closing Leliesingel, saying that "the safety of our children weighs heavier than any interests of party politics!" In addition, they urge the B&W to arrange a meeting with them before taking a decision on Noorderplantsoen, "all the more because we have been thus far kept outside the discussion over the plans since the Plan Intermediate Step"¹⁸³.

Although residents responded only to MODEL 4, the B&W had actually left the door open also for the circuit model, as indicated by the statement of Zunderdorp in the Nieuwsblad, even after it published the final proposal. Business organisations, which had communicated with the municipality much more intensively than residents, seem to have regarded rather this model as the most likely. For example, according to a written opinion by the Businesspeople's Consultation Traffic Structure Groningen-north, which arrived at the municipality on June 21st, "businesspeople of the Action Committee have learned that the B&W plans to introduce one-way traffic on Leliesingel in a northerly direction and drain off traffic through Oranjesingel in a southerly direction", and "This version", that is, the circuit model, "is firmly rejected by us". Successively, they "also, of course," reject the model of "completely closing Leliesingel and hampering traffic on Kruissingel", that is, MODEL 4. Although both models, in comparison with the Compromise Proposal, gave further concessions to the business community, leaving smooth routes for through traffic, it after all dismissed both of these models, because "we want to distance ourselves from all those measures that are aimed at still further harming accessibility of the city of Groningen and, through this, preventing our businesses from optimally functioning". Concerning the meeting between the action committee and the municipality on May 3rd, where these models were put forward, "We do not want to conform to"¹⁸⁴ the minutes, says this written opinion.

6. The Decision-Making Plan Intermediate Step

6.1 Weighing interests

On June 28th, 1985, the B&W published the Decision-Making Plan Intermediate Step, which the B&W itself called a "great compromise"¹⁸⁵. While the Discussion Plan held up an utterly vague objective of "meeting traffic demand", the Decision-Making Plan hardly mentions the objective of a traffic policy, and instead puts forward "weighing interests" as a principle of planning. At the beginning of "2. Outlines of reactions and investigations", it argues that it is impossible to precisely predict the effects of a traffic policy, and, as an example, refers to the effects on shops on Kerklaan. "A regional customer of a speciality shop" there might not come any more, "if he can not quickly reach this destination" as a result of measures in the Discussion Plan. On the other hand, "this customer who sits in the car already long to reach that specific address" might not be affected by an "extra trip time of a few minutes". That is why, "It entails a certain degree of risk to strive for objectives such as increasing traffic safety and traffic livability in existing neighbourhoods". Given this situation, the plan argues that "weighing interests remains a proper method to improve the situation for the public interests"¹⁸⁶.

However, it goes without saying that we have to "weigh interests" when we decide something. In "1. Introduction", the plan also uses phrases such as "equally weighing interests" and "a process of weighing as convincingly as possible":

The governability of a city is dependent on a certain degree of trust in the municipal executive's equally weighing interests, even if this weighing turns out to be disadvantageous to particular groups in the end. It is up to citizens and interest groups to put that trust in the democratically chosen executive, but up to the local authority to lay the basis for that trust through a process of weighing as convincingly as possible.¹⁸⁷

These modifiers such as "equally" and "as convincingly as possible", however, do not substantially add a meaning at all. It is again a matter of course that important decisions have to go through "a process of weighing as convincingly as possible". Concerning "equally weighing interests", the plan says nothing about based on what kind of facts the authority can claim that interests were indeed equally weighed. If based on the fact that the municipality spared time equally to consult with various interest groups, this principle had already been undermined, because the consultations after the Compromise Proposal were unequally frequent with business organisations and even particular individuals¹⁸⁸.

The fact that a traffic policy is difficult to predict its effects and always carries a risk means that it requires political decisions. As the framework for these decisions, each political party publishes an election program, whose validity is judged by the electorate. Therefore, what the democratically chosen executive should do to lay the basis for the electorate's trust is to weigh interests within the framework of the election program. However, this Decision-Making Plan, which was drafted under the responsibility of the

PvdA *wethouder*, does not mention at all those principles such as facilitating bicycles and public transport, restraining car use and excluding through traffic from residential neighbourhoods, which the PvdA had advocated since the 1970s. Only with the principle of "weighing interests", it then in "2. Outlines" puts forward basic policies for modifying the Discussion Plan, referring to the responses from the public and the investigations conducted in the meantime.

First of all, it points out that "most of suggestions from the Discussion Plan, except for those for Selwerd and Paddepoel, are strongly negatively responded by all business organisations and individual businesspeople", and examines their effects on economy. According to the plan, we have to answer the following questions to know the economic effects of a traffic policy:

- (a) how sensitive are the businesses to measures related to car traffic on particular routes? (how much sales by car on which routes?)
- (b) does a part of the existing sales by car shift to other shopping concentrations as a result of the adjustment of the existing route or the poorer quality of the new route?
- (c) to what extent is a decline in sales, if any, compensated by the redistribution effects of other (traffic) measures?
- (...)
- (f) to what extent does dismissal of the staff lead to an increase in unemployment? (sales elsewhere indeed increase, and, as a result, a demand for the staff will also more or less increase.)
- (g) to what extent will all these cause the closure of businesses?
- (h) how serious are the results of the closure of businesses in terms of the level of facilities in a particular neighbourhood?

As a result of the "redistribution effect"¹⁸⁹ mentioned in (c), "A decline in sales in a particular shopping concentration will indeed, if spending remains the same, lead to an increase in sales elsewhere". For example, shops on Korreweg might suffer from a decline in sales with the closure of Korrebrug. If, however, the underpass on Asingastraat is also closed, customers who went to the Shopping Centre Paddepoel might turn to them through the "reverse effect" mentioned by the VROV, and on balance these shops might see an increase in sales.

In drafting this Decision-Making Plan, "the investigation has been necessarily limited to the first question, with a careful attempt to give an insight into a part of the aspects that influence the answer to the second question". That is, concerning (a), "The various investigations carried out by the municipality and interest groups give on average a good insight". Concerning (b), the municipal Secretary-Division of Investigation and Statistics¹⁹⁰ has estimated the extra time required with alternative routes, the plan says. Furthermore, it argues that a discussion among the public has also been limited to these two questions, and, as a result, "some groups of residents" have feared an "absolute and inevitable decline in the level of facilities in their neighbourhood". "Particularly the discussion about Noorderplantsoen has suffered from this simplistic approach", it adds. However, although the plan calls it "simplistic", it after all argues that the economic effects can be predicted only by answering (a) and (partly) (b):

In this plan, the questions (c) to (h) cannot be answered either. It, however, is certain that the possibility of effects intended in these questions increases, as the percentage of sales by car is bigger, and the alternative route is less attractive.¹⁹¹

This seems not to deserve a conclusion drawn from "a process of weighing as convincingly as possible". For example, if the Shopping Centre Paddepoel heavily relies on customers by car, that is, attracts customers from a wider area, it can indeed suffer from a substantial decline in sales when the route Eikenlaan - Kapteynlaan is cut. However, thanks to the redistribution effect, shops on Korreweg can contrarily enjoy a substantial increase in sales. That is why, if a particular shopping concentration heavily relies on customers by car, the redistribution effect is indeed large. Sales of this shopping concentration will decrease considerably, while those of other concentrations will increase considerably. However, it is not bad that the redistribution effect is considerable. In relation to the question (f), this does not cause an increase in unemployment as a whole. In relation to (h), this is rather favourable, because this contributes to maintaining a certain level of facilities in each neighbourhood. In addition, this is recommendable in terms of reducing car use.

Based on such a rough conclusion, the plan examines the effects on each shopping concentration only in terms of two aspects, that is, the question (a) and the extra time required with alternative routes. For example, concerning the Shopping Centre Paddepoel, because "Customers come from a wider area and thus overwhelmingly by car", "It is very important to maintain the inter-neighbourhood connection via the so-called inner ring (Petrus Campersingel - Kapteynlaan - Sumatrалаan - Asingastraat - Eikenlaan)", as the shopping centre insisted. On the other hand, the shopping street Kerklaan has mainly a "neighbourhood-oriented character", and "this is clear from the very low percentage of sales by car". Nevertheless, the plan argues that this fact "urges extra caution because this very low percentage can be important in keeping the shopping street". With regard to the alternative routes for this shopping street, measures in the Discussion Plan will force a "very considerable detour" particularly from the south, and therefore "it must be attempted to improve this"¹⁹², the plan concludes. However, it estimates the extra time resulting from a detour just at "1 to 3 minutes"¹⁹³, and itself pointed out just before that it was a "simplistic approach" to suppose that such a detour immediately caused a decline in the level of facilities.

Korrebrug is particularly important for the builders' merchant Wickes on Ulgersmaweg, according to the plan. 45% of customers come via this bridge, and its closure "would mean a very considerable detour"¹⁹⁴. Although the actual extra time is estimated at "1 to at least 5 minutes"¹⁹⁵ and Zunderdorp as well as the VROV argued that this shop had been able to know the possibility of the closure when it had settled there, the plan concludes that "a solution for Korrebrug must be found, with which (...) a certain degree of car traffic remains possible". Concerning Nieuwe Ebbingestraat, while measures in the Discussion Plan hardly influence shops there, "the design of the entrance to Nieuwe Ebbingestraat", the so-called square version, "is regarded as very

threatening by shopkeepers", the plan says. The conclusion is that "it has to be examined if the established objective (a smooth passage toward Boterdiep) can be achieved also in a different way"¹⁹⁶. However, because it maintains the objective, "a smooth passage toward Boterdiep", the plan finds that this objective itself does not harm shops there. Then, the plan dismisses the square version only because of strong opposition from shopkeepers, without any reasonable bases. To sum up, while this plan argues that many factors have to be considered to know the economic effects, it after all omits most of them, does not apply the remaining factors closely and adopts a basic policy of not preventing car traffic by customers as much as possible, as the business community had demanded.

Also in relation to freight traffic, the plan adopts a similar policy. According to it, a traffic policy has been aimed at limiting "private car use", on the condition that "the use of cars for business, particularly freight transport, is prevented preferably as little as possible". However, such preferential treatment of freight traffic had not been actually advocated in the past municipal traffic policy as well as the election programs of the PvdA. For example, when the VCP was modified, the demand of the business community was rejected to allow lorries to cross the sector boundaries¹⁹⁷. Furthermore, the plan insists that excluding freight traffic is not only "undesirable" for the "above mentioned basic reason" but also "in practice hardly feasible in many cases". Concerning the latter, "placing a no-thoroughfare sign will have little or no effect", while "physical measures such as a height and width limit" cannot be mostly introduced, because "a large number of exceptions must be granted" to "dust carts, removal bans, circuit sales vehicles, construction lorries, fire engines, home delivery services, lorries supplying neighbourhood shops, street cleaning machines, etc." Causing a nuisance for residents, however, is through freight traffic, and, even if a route is cut with physical measures against such traffic, there is no problem for lorries mentioned above. In fact, the Compromise Proposal, which was presented just three months ago, stated in relation to Kapteynlaan and Sumatrалаan that "freight traffic will be (partly) excluded (with a height or width limit that can be physically forced), if the development is not satisfactory". For all these inconsistencies, the Decision-Making Plan concludes that "Measures that are specifically aimed at keeping out freight traffic must be in principle, if possible at all, avoided on neighbourhood opening roads"¹⁹⁸. That is why, neighbourhood opening roads must in principle accept through freight traffic. Now that they accept through freight traffic, they must necessarily accept through passenger traffic. Although the Discussion Plan indicated that through traffic had to be in principle excluded from neighbourhood opening roads, the Decision-Making Plan has substantially redefined these as roads in principle carrying through traffic.

In relation to the route Petrus Campersingel - Eikenlaan, which particularly transporters insisted on leaving open, the plan makes a further concession. Because "the detail of adjusting Sumatrалаan/ Kapteynlaan and Asingastraat to their future

neighbourhood opening function can be influenced by the effects of the opening of the whole eastern ring road", the plan chooses not to decide "the redesign proposal and a possible plan to exclude freight traffic" until the ring road system is completed. Business organisations had urged the municipality not to take decisions not only on this route but also on all other places before the opening of the whole ring roads. In response to this persistent demand, the plan argues that "decision-making would take so much time that concrete measures would be taken only after the completion of the ring road system". "If the traffic situation actually deviates from the predictions, adjustment would be still possible"¹⁹⁹. In addition, this plan tries to reduce measures against through traffic to a minimum. That is why, it seems that the above demand of the business community has also been substantially met with this plan.

In stark contrast to the attitude to the business community is that to the ENFB and VBV. According to the plan, both organisations in their written opinions criticise the B&W for a "change in policy", and "improperly evoke an impression that a substantially different policy from in the 1970s would be now implemented". In fact, the plan insists, "a policy is still pursued that is aimed at facilitating traffic by foot, bicycle and public transport, and restraining car use". It lists following examples as proof:

They remarkably do not recognise that this traffic policy is implemented on a large scale but rather quietly, particularly in those considerably new residential areas that have been developed these 10 years, but also through, for example, realising *woonerven*, improving shopping streets, introducing 30 km/h (even at the neighbourhood level), implementing small reconstructions to keep out through traffic (Corpus den Hoorn), introducing bike paths.

While the plan hardly responds to each argument put forward by these two organisations, it concludes that "They remarkably hardly understand that it can result in seriously undermining other interests to drastically change historically developed situations and that, for that reason, weighing carefully is necessary in these situations"²⁰⁰.

Both the ENFB and VBV, however, did not mention past achievements based on past plans, as listed above, but the content of the Discussion Plan, which was to guide a traffic policy in the future. The plan, that is, the B&W, should have explained which measures in the Discussion Plan were actually aimed at restraining car use. Indeed, the ENFB asked for closing Noorderplantsoen and Korrebrug in its written opinion. But these projects were included in the Discussion Plan, and the ENFB just urged to actually realise these. Particularly concerning the latter, the B&W itself said in the Discussion Plan that "The traffic situation on and around the bridge is chaotic in the rush hours and unacceptable from the point of view of safety", and that there was a "decisive" reason for closing it. On the other hand, the written opinion by the VBV referred to rather basic issues, as seen earlier, and did not ask for, for example, cutting a particular route. The B&W in this Decision-Making Plan seems to jump to a conclusion that these are organisations that demand unrealistic measures without considering economy, and almost emotionally dismiss their arguments.

Among arguments by the ENFB, however, the B&W seems, at least, not to reject the argument for narrowing neighbourhood opening roads with four lanes to two lanes. According to the plan, while "Exact standards for the design of neighbourhood opening roads have not (yet) been formulated by the municipal executive", "roads such as Petrus Campersingel, Korreweg and Eikenlaan" are considered to be models. These roads were narrowed to two lanes late in the 1970s, when bike paths were introduced. The plan concludes: "That indeed means that Zonnelaan should be adjusted, but this is also the case with Pleiadenlaan, Asingastraat, Sumatralaan, Kapteynlaan and Prinsesseweg"²⁰¹. So, the plan seems to argue for narrowing also these roads to two lanes, but its policy is not clear in this regard.

Residents repeatedly expressed anxiety about the shift of through traffic resulting from closing Noorderplantsoen. As one of measures against this shift, the Discussion Plan proposed a northerly connection from Ebbingbrug to Boterdiep. According to the Decision-Making Plan, it has become clear that this idea "causes too many problems". That is why, "it is important to try to divert northerly car traffic to the western ring road as early as possible"²⁰², and the plan, like the Compromise Proposal, proposes the reconstruction of Westerhaven so that "traffic from the direction of Eendrachtsbrug spontaneously proceeds to the accessibility route Hoendiep - A-weg". However, considering shops on Westersingel, it adds that "Westersingel will have to be well accessible for car traffic from the south". Oranjobuurt also asked to take measures against existing through traffic on Nassaulaan, the plan says, and "we cannot do so much against this, if Nassaulaan maintains the neighbourhood opening function". On the other hand, "If the neighbourhood opening function is transferred to Oranjesingel, it becomes possible to make Nassaulaan car-limited"²⁰³. As a result, however, Oranjesingel has to function as an alternative route to Leliesingel, which carries much more through traffic than Nassaulaan, as seen later. Concerning the questionnaires conducted by residents, which repeatedly proved that the overwhelming majority of residents opposed closing the park, the plan casts a doubt on the representativeness of these questionnaires, saying that "the questionnaires must be seen as collections of individual opinions, but not as representative opinion polls". The plan also quotes the argument for the closure put forward by Noorderplantsoenbuurt, and concludes that it is the "first priority" to close the park:

Conclusions:

2.7.1.

Noorderplantsoen is, as a green zone, considerably important for a large part of the city, which scarcely has "large green" per resident. From this point of view, it deserves the first priority to enhance the recreational usefulness through making a substantial part of Noorderplantsoen car-free.

This conclusion, however, is immediately followed by another conclusion, according to which it seems that the closure is not always necessary:

2.7.2.

The route through Noorderplantsoen is a dangerous section of the main bicycle structure. The

measures in the Discussion Plan Intermediate Step can improve this effectively, but that can be also achieved through maintaining a part of car traffic.

As an example of concrete measures, it refers to the "introduction of one-way traffic with accompanying measures"²⁰⁴, as the circuit model proposed.

After presenting basic policies for modifying the Discussion Plan, successively in "3. Reconsideration and recommendations", the B&W puts forward the "traffic structure" and "measures" for each sub-area, as in the Discussion Plan.

6.2 Sub-area I (Selwerd and Paddepoel)

According to the plan, in relation to both the traffic structure and measures proposed for this area in the Discussion Plan, "few reactions have come", and "Therefore, we suggest succeeding these recommendations in the Discussion Plan as they are"²⁰⁵. The demands of the ENFB or ROVER were again not accepted. Particularly, the plan does not present any measures to reduce the "overcapacity" of neighbourhood opening roads such as Zonnelaan, although these measures were indicated in "2. Outlines".

6.3 Sub-area II (Noorderplantsoen and its environs)

The plan first of all states that "so many objections had been submitted" to the proposal for this area in the Discussion Plan that "a complete reconsideration was clearly desirable, particularly in terms of the proposed neighbourhood opening structure". It successively presents the four models that Zunderdorp put forward in his intraparty memorandum, and evaluates each model. It, however, does not mention MODEL 1 at all, which is the original proposal in the Discussion Plan. It indeed points out that this model attracted "so many objections", but this alone cannot be a reason for dismissing it. The plan rejects MODEL 2 (a compromise between neighbourhood organisations), because this model means "too drastic interference with openness of the neighbourhood for car traffic", while, in modifying the Discussion Plan, "we particularly strive for improving openness for car traffic". That is why, the B&W concedes that the principal objective of the Decision-Making Plan is to address "so many objections" raised by the business community. It, however, pretends to pay attention also to demands of residents. With regard to MODEL 3 (a proposal in the Compromise Proposal), "The proponents of car-free Noorderplantsoen (the majority of the neighbourhood organisations) reject this compromise", says the plan. In addition, the "opponents of the original proposal" find one-way traffic in MODEL 3 "insufficient to guarantee good accessibility particularly to Kerklaan and Wilhelminakade", and "This model therefore seems to be able to expect little support", it argues. As a matter of fact, "the majority of the neighbourhood organisations" or the overwhelming majority of residents did not support the car-free park, and, as a result, residents did not make objections against the Compromise Proposal, except for those of Noorderplantsoenbuurt.

Nevertheless, the plan assumes that the majority of residents did support the car-free park, and insists that, because MODEL 4 can realise not only "good openness of the neighbourhood for car traffic" but also "completely car-free Leliesingel", this model "can probably expect the most support". The plan frankly concedes that this model leads to a dramatic increase in through traffic on Oranjesingel. "The amount of car traffic will considerably increase in the southern part" of this road, and "it can be expected to multiply into several hundreds", while this part carried " \pm 90 per hour in both directions" in the existing situation. This amount, however, "will not be extremely large for a neighbourhood opening road", and "Moreover, this part of Oranjesingel has houses only on one side with low density". In addition, as mentioned in "2. Outlines", Nassaulaan can be relieved of through traffic with this model, and "As a result, an important desire of Oranjebuurt is fulfilled". Finally, it points out that "Furthermore, it is of course very important for Oranjebuurt to have a large continuous green zone in its close proximity". It is obvious, considering opinions lodged from Oranjebuurt, that these arguments almost rub residents there up the wrong way. This model closes Leliesingel including its southern part, which was kept open for Hortusbuurt in the Discussion Plan. The plan argues that "Oranjesingel, Kerklaan and Kruisstraten can, if necessary, function as the extra opening for Hortusbuurt". This, however, is again unacceptable to residents of Oranjebuurt.

In conclusion, the plan suggests choosing MODEL 4 in terms of the neighbourhood opening structure:

Recommendation 3.2.1.

Deciding the neighbourhood opening structure for Sub-area II as shown in *kaart 6* (MODEL 4 in Figure 16- by the author).

Concerning measures for realising this structure, it lists first the following as "Recommendation 3.2.2.":

Recommendation 3.2.2.

- (a) surfacing Wilhelminakade between Plantsoenbrug and Herman Colleniusbrug with asphalt;
- (b) reconstructing Prinsesseweg: introducing bike paths and surfacing with asphalt;
- (c) improving the routes Boterdiep - Diepenring northern side and Visserbrug - Boteringebrug through adjusting traffic signals;
- (d) improving the intersection of Wilhelminakade and Plantsoenbrug in terms of the turning circle of large lorries, and if necessary to enlarge the capacity;
- (e) reconstructing Westerhaven to stimulate car traffic from the south to use the western ring road;
- (f) reconstructing the accessibility route around Nieuwe Ebbingestraat so that car traffic does not use the Noorderplantsoen route unnecessarily.

Successively, it examines measures for Herman Colleniusbrug, and, "To address the serious objections against the original proposal (one-way traffic in a northerly direction)", it suggests maintaining two-way traffic, but leaving only one lane for cars and in exchange introducing two bicycle lanes. Including this proposal, the plan lists the following "additional measures" as "Recommendation 3.2.3.":

Recommendation 3.2.3.

- (a) improving safety in crossing Oranjesingel, and possibly taking some other small measures for

- the sake of the neighbourhood opening function;
- (b) making Leliesingel, from Plantsoenbrug to Kerklaan, car-free in a further stipulated manner;
- (c) taking measures on Kruissingel to limit the intensity and speed of car traffic and to protect bicycle traffic;
- (d) taking measures on Boteringesingel to protect bicycle traffic;
- (e) if necessary, taking some measures on the route Boteringesingel - Boteringestraat - Kruisstraten for the sake of the neighbourhood opening function (priority of traffic turning from Boteringesingel to Nieuwe Boteringestraat; if necessary, moving the traffic signal to the intersection of Nieuwe Boteringestraat and Kruisstraten);
- (f) taking effective measures against existing through traffic on Nassaulaan in a further stipulated manner;
- (g) reconstructing Herman Colleniusbrug and intersections on both sides of the bridge so that one lane on the bridge can be sufficient for two-way car traffic, and two safe bicycle lanes can be introduced.²⁰⁶

We can see that measures against the shift of through traffic, which residents had steadily pressed for, have further paled in comparison with the Discussion Plan. Measures taken outside the neighbourhoods are only Recommendation 3.2.2.(e) and (f). Concerning (e), Westersingel remains "well accessible", as mentioned in "2. Outlines". There is no guarantee that a 50 % reduction in through traffic, which Zunderdorp promised to residents, can be really achieved with these two measures. Moreover, utterly no measures are proposed for the inside of the neighbourhoods. A speed limit of 30 km/h, which the Discussion Plan found "preferable", is not mentioned at all. In relation to Oranjesingel (3.2.3.(a)), this plan rather aims at realising the smooth flow of through traffic there "for the sake of the neighbourhood opening function", and, in anticipation of increased and faster traffic, proposes improving safety in crossing this road. According to the explanation of MODEL 4, as quoted earlier, "the other half of this possible through traffic route must not be too attractive", and therefore the "actual neighbourhood opening function" should be shifted to Kruisstraten and Nieuwe Boteringestraat. However, Recommendation 3.2.3.(e) suggests making this route, which should not be too attractive, smooth for through traffic, although "if necessary".

6.4 Sub-area III (Korrewegwijk)

Concerning the neighbourhood opening structure for this area, because "reactions and further investigations do not furnish any reason" for modifying it, the plan argues for succeeding the original plan.

Concerning measures, it first mentions Korrebrug. Against the idea of closing the bridge to cars, "huge objections arouse among neighbourhood organisations as well as businesspeople", and the economic investigation has partly substantiated these objections, the plan says. It is suggested, as in the Compromise Proposal, that two-way traffic is allowed on one lane, and only freight traffic is excluded with a "physical width limit". There is no mention of "short comments" by the VROV, such as "only provisional" measures at first.

Then, the plan examines measures for the route Kapteynlaan - Sumatrallaan -

Asingastraat and those for the accessibility route Bedumerweg - Boterdiep, which had been consistently related to each other. The B&W presented two models in the Discussion Plan, and, while not decisively choosing between them, it argued that "preference must be temporarily given to MODEL II", because this model does not necessitate to demolish houses on Rodeweg. The B&W explains about this choice as follows in the Decision-Making Plan:

The sections 4.3.3. and 4.3.4. of the Discussion Plan present two models for these complex measures. Between them, the *college* has already in the presentation of the Discussion Plan decided to give a preference to the model with which Rodeweg does not have to be reconstructed and the "inner ring" remains open for car traffic in both directions.

"This choice was in general strongly supported during the participation round and in the consultation conducted later", it says.

However, the B&W, in the Discussion Plan, found the emergence of the inner ring unfavourable, and therefore, even if MODEL II was chosen, gave a preference to the measure (c), that is, "Preventing traffic from the north to the south and vice versa through reconstructing the intersection of Sumatrалаan, Bedumerweg and Asingastraat". In response, the business community strongly opposed any measures that would prevent the flow of car traffic on the inner ring, and, as a result, the Compromise Proposal at least gave up "closing" Kapteynlaan and Sumatrалаan. Maintaining the inner ring was a stretched interpretation of the Compromise Proposal by the business community. The B&W has after all accepted this interpretation in the Decision-Making Plan. In addition, concerning freight traffic on this route, it suspends its decision until the ring road system is completed, as mentioned in "2. Outlines":

Recommendation 3.3.4.

After the effect of the opening of the whole eastern ring road is known, deciding what kind of measures are necessary on Kapteynlaan, Sumatrалаan and Asingastraat to realise that:

- long-haul lorries are excluded;

(...)

There is no mention any more of the condition, which was stipulated in the Compromise Proposal, that freight traffic will be excluded "with a height or width limit that can be physically forced", unless it decreases. Now that the inner ring is maintained, the municipality will carry out only the "improvement of the current trace" for the accessibility route Bedumerweg - Boterdiep, without involving Rodeweg. In relation to the entrance to Nieuwe Ebbingestraat, succeeding the conclusion in "2. Outlines", "If the square version arouses objections, we will seek another solution to achieve the established objective (diverting the main stream into Gedempte Boterdiep)"²⁰⁷, it recommends.

To sum up, although it pretends to pay attention to demands of residents, the Decision-Making Plan substantially aims at solving objections raised by the business community as much as possible. As a result, the objective of keeping through traffic out of residential neighbourhoods, which the PvdA had advocated, has hardly been

crystallised. Compared to the Discussion Plan, it has been further thoroughly watered down in terms of measures against through traffic, and only the closure of Noorderplantsoen has survived, as a result of the pressure from within the PvdA. However, also concerning Noorderplantsoen, the B&W tried to the utmost to address objections from the business community, which has resulted in sacrificing the interests of residents.

In addition, even at this moment when the B&W published the Decision-Making Plan, it left the door open for the possibility to avoid closing the park. According to the Nieuwsblad dated June 29th, 1985, which reported the Decision-Making Plan, "*The college still conceals an alternative in its sleeves: the so-called circuit model*". The chairman of the Action Committee Northern Neighbourhoods, Top, "says that he is satisfied with the result of participation, given the first plan", that is, the Discussion Plan, "but that he still prefers the circuit model", this article reports. In preparation for the circuit model being adopted, the B&W presumably adds, in "2. Outlines, 2.7.2." of the Decision-Making Plan, that one-way traffic can also improve the safety of bicycles in Noorderplantsoen. While all measures for Sub-area II were listed under "recommendation 11" in the Discussion Plan, they are in the Decision-Making Plan divided and listed under "Recommendation 3.2.2." and "Recommendation 3.2.3.". Although there is no explanation for why the latter are "additional" measures, it can be presumed that the B&W, again preparing for the circuit model, puts in "Recommendation 3.2.3." those measures that are necessary only when Noorderplantsoen is actually closed. In addition, in "4. Costs, means and procedure", the B&W presents the schedule of the neighbourhood traffic plan for each sub-area, which should be drafted and implemented after the Decision-Making Plan is approved. According to this schedule, Sub-area II is dealt with in the last place. Although "some effective measures can be introduced in advance of the neighbourhood traffic plans", this is "certainly not the case with Noorderplantsoen", the B&W underscores. "Because of the far-reaching consequences that the closure of Leliesingel has for the accessibility of a large area"²⁰⁸. As a result, the closure of Leliesingel is, if implemented, scheduled for 1990.

7. The Decision on Car-Free Noorderplantsoen

7.1 Soft action

The B&W expressed, in "Introduction", an optimistic view on public acceptance of the Decision-Making Plan:

The reward for the past long round of weighing and consultation is that we can expect an understanding and agreement not only among municipal executives concerned and councillors but also among larger groups of the public.²⁰⁹

The proposal concerning Noorderplantsoen, however, had aroused fierce opposition not only among residents but also among businesspeople and their organisations, whose interests the B&W ought to have substantially integrated, and forged a so-called "monstrous alliance"²¹⁰ between them.

Residents of Oranjebuurt met with councillors of the PvdA on August 19th, and again stressed that the closure of Leliesingel could rather undermine the "recreational usefulness" of Noorderplantsoen and that "some unsafe traffic situations"²¹¹ would arise on Oranjesingel. The business organisations insisted that the idea of closing Leliesingel in the Decision-Making Plan originated from an "informal suggestion by **one** of representatives of businesspeople" at the meeting between the action committee and the municipality on May 3rd. The action committee rejected the "draft of a letter"²¹² prepared by its chairman Top, which indicated to accept the closure. The business organisations opposed not only closing Leliesingel. They also made objections to measures for Korrebrug and Herman Colleniusbrug, which allowed two-way traffic on one lane, the reconstruction of Westerhaven to divert through traffic to the western ring road, and the redesign of the entrance to Nieuwe Ebbingestraat, which should divert the main flow of traffic into Boterdiep, without sticking to the square version. With the basic standpoint that "Every restraining measure leads to a decline in sales"²¹³, they keep on opposing all those measures that somehow undermine the flow of car traffic, to whatever extent they are compromised.

The action committee, however, intended to begin with "soft action"²¹⁴ against the plan, and the written opinions, which business organisations submitted in response to the Decision-Making Plan, first of all appreciated the effort made by the B&W thus far:

The NCOV Groningen is grateful to the *college van B. en W.* for the fact that the possibility was amply provided to discuss the proposed measures, and that the opinion of the small and medium-sized business in Groningen was taken into account. (dated August 22nd, 1985, NCOV)

Surely, given the first Discussion Plan Intermediate Step, the business community, in this case, the employees were clearly taken into account in the Decision-Making Plan. (dated August 15th, 1985, Service Sector Union CNV)

It is all the more satisfying that the consultative body could have, from most of the proposals in the Decision-Making Plan, an impression that various interests were taken into account in a balanced manner. (dated August 18th, 1985, Consultative Body Small and Medium-sized Business)

It pleases the action committee that the *college van burgemeester en wethouders* and the responsible *wethouder* for traffic wanted to take into account the interests of the business

community. This is clear from the proposals made in the Decision-Making Plan. (dated September 6th, 1985, Action Committee Northern Neighbourhoods)²¹⁵

The business organisations asked the B&W to postpone the municipal council committee Traffic and Transport about the plan, which was scheduled for September 19th, the day for late night shopping, so that shopkeepers could attend the committee meeting. The action committee held a "hearing" on September 11th, inviting all the political parties, and asked their views on the plan.

Facing persistent opposition to closing Leliesingel not only from residents but also from the business community, the PvdA was forced to make a clearer choice. That is, whether it would fully accept the demand of the business community and keep Leliesingel open for cars as it was, breaching the election program, or it would close Leliesingel based on the election program and put forward effective measures against the shift of through traffic so that at least residents could accept the closure. The *wethouders* and party group leaned toward the former option. At the division executive²¹⁶ meeting on September 18th, the party group leader Tonny van der Vondervoort reported that *wethouders* and councillors, in the intraparty consultation, had discussed reconsidering the closure of Leliesingel. Because "some councillors find that public support has become minimum". In the consultation, it had been suggested to organise the "neighbourhood evening" on this issue, she said. The members of the division executive, in response, cast a doubt on the necessity for such an evening and pressed for closing Leliesingel one after another: "The measure must be implemented. There are still only two beautiful parks in the city", "This issue has been discussed so long. The measure must be implemented", and the like. Van der Vondervoort replied that "we must emphasise in the presentation, for example with a pamphlet, that various additional measures will be first introduced before we close". The division executive finally agreed with the following conclusion. That is why, it took a step toward the latter option:

the executive finds that the Plan Intermediate Step must be implemented. With regard to the pamphlet, it seems good that it is published soon, announcing various additional traffic measures taken before the closure.²¹⁷

At the party group meeting of the PvdA on September 23rd, it was decided to adopt this policy of the division executive, although there were some "councillors who are doubtful of the appropriateness of the decision"²¹⁸. According to the Nieuwsblad dated September 24th, 1985, which reported this decision, "Tonny van der Vondervoort emphasised that the plan includes more than the closure of Leliesingel". "In advance of the closure, other measures are taken, which are aimed at reducing traffic intensity around Noorderplantsoen by half", she said. She also turned down the request of the *college* partner CDA that the decision on closing Leliesingel should be postponed to 1988 when the preparation for the closure, if implemented, would actually start. "We must now take a decision and not reconsider it any more", she said definitely.

7.2 The monstrous alliance

So, the PvdA again chose to close Leliesingel, and rather started to stress measures against through traffic. With this development, the campaign by the business community rapidly turned into a hard line. The action committee bought two full pages of advertising space in *Gezinsbode* dated September 20th, in which it appealed for coming to the "Great Protest Meeting" on September 24th and fiercely criticised the Decision-Making Plan (Figure 17). In appealing for participation, it displays the headline, "STOP THIS TRAFFIC DISASTER BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE!", and gives an "Urgent call to all citizens", saying "COME MASSIVELY". The criticism is presented as "The opinion of" each of "Action Committee Northern Neighbourhoods", "Employees' Organisations", "Business Community of Groningen" and "The Residents of Hortusbuurt, Oranjebuurt, Noorderplantsoenbuurt". In the opinion of the action committee, it is argued that this plan will further strengthen a nationwide "traffic-unfriendly image" of Groningen, which the VCP has created, and is a new "attack on the investment by businesses in Groningen". While "The whole business community and almost all residents are against these crazy plans", "the interests of a political party threatens to override the interests of the city", the action committee argues. Unlike the PvdA, "the Action Committee opts for the Interests of the City!", and it calls out for rallying forces: "LET DEMOCRACY TRIUMPH AND JOIN THE ACTION COMMITTEE". "Employees' Organisations" ask Mayor Staatsen to exert leverage with the municipal council, and "Business Community" brings forward shocking phrases one after another: "customers will decrease in a disastrous way", "Investments will decline", "bankruptcies and massive dismissals must be feared", and the like. "The Residents", who are spoken for by the action committee, emphasise the negative impacts on residential environment: "The playgrounds are before long placed in the middle of exhaust of traffic", "Oranjebuurt is cut off from Noorderplantsoen with the busy road" and moreover "Crime will increase!".



Figure 17: A cry against the Decision-Making Plan
(Source: *Gezinsbode*, September 20th, 1985)

At the protest meeting on September 24th, "More than two hundreds of people" congregated. Here, although "The residents, without being influenced by economic motives, are the most diversified in their criticism", "most of the attendees can agree with the views of the action committee", the Nieuwsblad reported. These views were: "not taking measures until the ring road system is completed, and not closing but reconstructing Leliesingel, Kruissingel and Boteringesingel in such a way that all traffic participants have their own lanes". They also agreed to stage a "protest march"²¹⁹ from Leliesingel to the city hall on October 1st, when the municipal council committee, which had been postponed in response to the request by the business organisations, discussed the Decision-Making Plan. It was also reported that "four representatives of residents were admitted into the action committee"²²⁰. In the meantime, shopkeepers who opposed closing Leliesingel displayed posters reading "FOR SALE" on shop windows, indicating the serious effects of the closure.

On October 1st, as scheduled, "about 300 anxious residents and businesspeople" staged a protest march, and attended the municipal council committee. Here, representatives of eight organisations, including the action committee, presented their views, and "made it clear in various wordings that the whole plan to close Noorderplantsoen can be scrapped as long as they are concerned". Successively, the VVD and GPV expressed their opposition against the closure, while the PPR and PSP, for whom the proposal by the B&W "does not go far enough"²²¹, expressed their support for it, on the condition that the shift of through traffic to adjacent neighbourhoods should be prevented. In November, the action committee submitted to the B&W and councillors a written opinion focusing on the closure of Leliesingel, with the name of "The action committee of businesses and residents". It emphasises that residents as well as businesses oppose the closure. "Proofs of unanimity between businesses and residents concerning the proposal for Noorderplantsoen were provided" at the protest meeting on September 24th and council committee meeting on October 1st, it argues. Referring again to the fact that "public support lacks among residents and businesses", and the impact on the "negative image of Groningen", it presses for not closing Leliesingel to cars.

7.3 Model (b)

Facing such strenuous opposition by the monstrous alliance, the PvdA leaders again started to hesitate to close Leliesingel. The B&W had not been able to present a bill, that is, a final proposal to the municipal council, for a while since the council committee meeting, and, as a result, the VVD and GPV even expected that "something different would be proposed"²²². In fact, the B&W prepared a bill that fundamentally modified measures related to Noorderplantsoen, in addition to a bill that succeeded the Decision-Making Plan as it was. Although this fact was mentioned neither by the local newspapers nor at the municipal council in those days, the file related to the Plan Intermediate Step, which the municipality keeps now, contains two versions of the bill, that is, "Model (a)" and "Model (b)". These models are utterly the same partway. After referring succinctly to the progress since the Discussion Plan, both models propose

succeeding the Decision-Making Plan in relation to Sub-area I and III. The reason is as follows:

It was clear not only from the handling at the municipal council committee but also from the consultation preceding this that the proposals in the Decision-Making Plan related to Selwerd, Paddepoel and Korrewegwijk got sufficient support not only from most of the concerned but also at the municipal council committee.

On the other hand, they admit that the discussion about Noorderplantsoen (Sub-area II) was the "reason for us to consider the proposal once again", causing a delay in presenting the bill. They also indicate that this reconsideration was necessitated because of the conflicting interpretation of the result of the meeting with the action committee on May 3rd:

This also found its reason in the fact that it became clear at this stage that a part of the consultation partners did not interpret the results of the conducted consultation in such a manner that we might have supposed.

They mention measures for this area in the Discussion Plan, objections to them and the Compromise Proposal to solve these objections. Because "any form of enthusiasm was recognised among no parties" about this Compromise Proposal, "we decided a proposal that was put forward in the Decision-Making Plan, based not only on partially car-free Noorderplantsoen but also on providing a better alternative for the neighbourhood opening car traffic", they explain. Concerning objections to this Decision-Making Plan, they regard them as not substantial but related to the "way of implementation":

The objections that are raised also against this proposal in a large number have in many cases more to do with the uncertainty about the way of implementation than with the proposal itself.

They also reject the repeated argument that the completion of the ring road system would make car-free Noorderplantsoen unnecessary, because "we expect little change in the situation in Noorderplantsoen". They add that "We, however, are of the opinion that, as a result of some of the measures proposed in the Decision-Making Plan Intermediate Step, car traffic proceeding to Noorderplantsoen will decrease". From here, these two models diverge from each other, drawing utterly different conclusions.

Model (a), continuously to the above quotation, concludes that "Considering all, we maintain the proposals with regard to Noorderplantsoen and its environs that are presented in the Decision-Making Plan". That is why, this model proposes succeeding the Decision-Making Plan as a whole. However, if the B&W had wanted to draw this conclusion convincingly, it should have stated this conclusion directly after it rejected the effect of the ring road system, and, as a response to anxiety among residents about the shift of through traffic, should have used the sentence: "We, however, are of the opinion that (...)". By arranging sentences in such an unnatural manner, the B&W enables itself to draw a different conclusion in Model (b).

Model (b) successively argues as follows:

Based on these two reasons, that is, doubts about the way of implementation on one hand and the effects of some measures outside Noorderplantsoen on the other, we are of the opinion that we find a reason to take a somewhat different approach in character to the decision taken now for this area.

Therefore, the B&W chooses an "approach with which the way of implementation is left to the neighbourhood traffic plan that will be prepared", and, in addition, "the detail of the neighbourhood opening structure is not now in advance fixed, but fixed when the neighbourhood traffic plan is decided". This argument, however, is completely inconsistent with what the B&W at first put forward as a reason for drafting the Plan Intermediate Step. As quoted earlier, it argued in those days that "it was obviously not desirable to decide these issues in neighbourhood traffic plans, because then the mutual relations would be lost sight of". Model (b) presents the following four "preconditions" within which this neighbourhood traffic plan "will be worked out by the *college*":

- a. facilitating traffic safety, particularly of cyclists and pedestrians;
- b. preventing through car traffic that has no destination in the adjacent neighbourhoods; particularly limiting traffic intensity on residential streets as much as possible;
- c. maintaining sufficient accessibility by car to businesses and shopping concentrations;
- d. restoring the recreational function of Noorderplantsoen and improving the quality of the green structure along Leliesingel and Kruissingel, particularly through making Leliesingel car-free and (further) a green improvement plan developed by the municipal Department of Public Garden.

Successively, it adds that "It goes without saying that, if it becomes clear that it is not well possible to do justice to all these preconditions to a sufficient degree, then a reconsideration is also necessary". That is why, the B&W in this model admits from the beginning that there is a possibility that these preconditions, including the closure of Leliesingel, are not met. The B&W proposes making a plan just on trial, taking into account these preconditions, although it might be impossible. So, this is a "bill" that hardly involves a political decision, and, therefore, cannot be the subject of the decision by the municipal council. Anyway, based on the above arguments, this model modifies Recommendation 3.2.1. and 3.2.3. as follows so that it can have a format of a bill:

Recommendation 3.2.1.

For Noorderplantsoen and its environs, deciding the main car structure as shown in the *kaarten* 3 to 6 (MODEL 1 to 4 in Figure 16 - by the author). Kruissingel and Leliesingel do not belong to this main car structure.

Not deciding now in advance the detail of the neighbourhood opening structure, but working out in the framework of the neighbourhood traffic plan that will be prepared.

Asking the *college* to assume the following preconditions when it prepares the neighbourhood traffic plan:

- a. facilitating traffic safety, particularly of cyclists and pedestrians;
- b. preventing through car traffic that has no destination in the adjacent neighbourhoods; particularly limiting traffic intensity on residential streets as much as possible;
- c. keeping sufficient accessibility by car to businesses and shopping concentrations;
- d. restoring the recreational function of Noorderplantsoen and improving the quality of the green structure along Leliesingel and Kruissingel, particularly through making Leliesingel car-free and (further) a green improvement plan developed by the municipal Department of Public Garden.

Recommendation 3.2.3.

- (a) taking measures on Kruissingel to limit the intensity and speed of car traffic and to protect

- bicycle traffic;
- (b) taking measures on Boteringesingel to protect bicycle traffic;
- (c) reconstructing Herman Colleniusbrug and intersections on both sides of the bridge so that one lane on the bridge can be sufficient for two-way car traffic, and two safe bicycle lanes can be introduced.

It is unclear from the materials at hand what kind of discussion followed about these two models among the PvdA *wethouders*, councillors and party members. The B&W after all, on December 17th, decided to propose Model (a) to the municipal council and announced it on December 23rd, while CDA *wethouder* H. Morssink²²³ maintained a minority opinion. Although it took more than two months after the council committee meeting, the final proposal turned out to be "absolutely nothing new"²²⁴. Now that the B&W chose to propose the closure of Leliesingel to the municipal council, the PvdA, particularly *wethouder* Zunderdorp, had to put forward more clearly measures against the shift of through traffic to garner support from the residents and the PSP and PPR. According to the Nieuwsblad, he promised the PSP "no through traffic on Oranjesingel" and "obstructions"²²⁵ placed there. He also accepted the demand of the PPR to move forward the closure, it was reported. He then announced that the bill was introduced in the municipal council on January 8th, 1986.

With the rapid development, the action committee arranged a press conference on January 4th, giving business and neighbourhood organisations an opportunity to present their views. M. Keijzer of the KvK, which volunteered as a "coordinator" of the press conference, again opposed the closure of Leliesingel, and also concerning the fact that the original plan was modified in many respects, dismissed it as "Halfhearted changes". "Please, the municipal executive, place the well-being of the city above political interests and dogmas", he called, while declaring that the plan would be taken ultimately to the Crown, if it was approved as it was. On the other hand, a resident of Oranjebuurt, who was "also representative of Nassauschool", stated that "now the majority could be found for the traffic plan"²²⁶, taking into account the commitments by Zunderdorp to the PPR and PSP. At the municipal council meeting on January 8th, the VVD and PPR asked to postpone the discussion about the Plan Intermediate Step, because "the party groups had too little time to prepare"²²⁷, and it was postponed for a week to January 15th. Just before this council meeting, on January 11th, the Action Committee Noorderplantsoen Car-Free²²⁸ was established. This committee "consists of representatives from Hortusbuurt, Oranjebuurt, Schildersbuurt, Noorderplantsoenbuurt and of the Groningen division of the ENFB", and "We plead for closing Noorderplantsoen to car traffic on behalf of a great number of residents", according to its press release. It adds that the closure must not lead to the shift of through traffic to "residential streets such as Nassaulaan and Oranjesingel". The same day, the committee submitted a written opinion to all councillors, asking to "vote for car-free Noorderplantsoen" on January 15th. Although it is of course open to question whether this committee really spoke "on behalf of a great number of residents"²²⁹, residents who supported the closure had certainly come forward not only in

Noorderplantsoenbuurt but also in other neighbourhoods, particularly in response to the commitments by Zunderdorp to take measures against through traffic.

7.4 The decision of the municipal council

At the municipal council meeting on January 15th, which opponents and supporters of car-free Noorderplantsoen crowded, this issue dominated the discussion, as before. First of all, each political party presented its standpoint. The VVD and CDA introduced the following motions to postpone the decision on Leliesingel until after 1988, given the negative impact on the image of Groningen, the lack of public support, the unknown effect of the ring roads, and the like:

The municipal council of Groningen (...) decides:

1. not to fix now the neighbourhood opening structure for Sub-area II, but to note;
2. that the decision on the neighbourhood opening structure is related to the plans made and worked out in 1988 - 1989 (VVD)

The municipal council of Groningen (...)

therefore also pronounces that decision-making on whether or not to close (or partially) Leliesingel should not happen earlier than in 1988 (CDA)

The GPV also pressed for postponing the decision, and squarely refuted the statement in the bill that the objections were rather related to "the way of implementation", on the ground that "there are a great number of objections against closing or making car-free Leliesingel. The way of implementation has nothing to do with this"²³⁰. Based on the conclusion (2.7.2.) in the Decision-Making Plan itself, which indicated that the closure was not always necessary in terms of traffic safety, it proposed a motion to investigate measures to improve the safety of pedestrians and cyclists without closing Leliesingel. The CPN put forward an almost similar standpoint. Although the D66 opposed postponing the decision, it opposed closing Leliesingel, because the proposal by the B&W was "counterproductive, not only in terms of traffic safety but also in terms of the objective (...) aimed at strengthening and improving the green lung"²³¹. Through amending Recommendation 3.2.3., it asked for introducing a speed limit of 30 km/h in Noorderplantsoen including Oranjesingel and Noorderbinnensingel, and realising "bicycle and pedestrian paths" on Leliesingel and Kruissingel.

For closing Leliesingel were, besides the PvdA, the PSP and PPR. The PSP was "extraordinarily unsatisfied" with the proposal as a whole, and argued that "This halfhearted proposal by the *college* further undermines the credibility of the active and directive traffic policy". In addition, the handling by the B&W had been thus far "based on uncertainty, anxiety and orienting itself toward agreement with businesspeople", and particularly concerning Noorderplantsoen, the B&W had made a "capital blunder", it said. Because "it was cheerfully announced that 50 % of car traffic could move to Oranjesingel", and, as a result, the "monstrous alliance" had been formed between residents and businesspeople. For the PSP, the issue was "very simple". That is, "no cars must run through parks". Although, in this respect, the proposal by the B&W,

which closed only Leliesingel, was "slack tea", the PSP expressed support for the proposal, because "slack tea is better than no tea"²³². The party, however, proposed the following motion to prevent the shift of through traffic to Oranjesingel, and attached to its support a condition that the B&W should accept this motion:

The municipal council of Groningen (...)

asks the *college* to take measures on Oranjesingel that prevent through car traffic here (preferably through cutting)

It also made a motion to introduce a speed limit of 30 km/h in Hortusbuurt and Oranjebuurt to protect these neighbourhoods adjacent to Noorderplantsoen from being disturbed by through traffic.

The PPR also expressed great disappointment at the proposal by the B&W as a whole. Compared with the original proposal, "the *college* has already diluted wine with water in very many respects", and "the *college* has given up so many measures that the action committee chairman Top and associates at first even wanted to agree", the party pointed out. It, however, insisted that "what is still now left in the Plan Intermediate Step must be implemented", and expressed support for closing Leliesingel. Like the PSP, it demanded that the closure should be accompanied with "clear measures that (...) effectively prevent a nuisance in Hortusbuurt and Oranjebuurt". For example, "a speed limit of 30 km/h must be introduced", "traffic humps must be placed", and, if necessary, "Oranjesingel must be cut". The PPR asked Zunderdorp for a "clear statement"²³³ about these additional measures. In addition, it made the following motion to close Leliesingel earlier than proposed, and attached to its support a condition that the B&W agree with this motion:

The municipal council of Groningen (...)

asks the *college*: to adjust the implementation schedule of the traffic measures for the northern neighbourhoods in such a manner that the proposed (partial) closure of Noorderplantsoen to car traffic can happen in 1987

After each political party expressed its opinion, Zunderdorp took the platform. He first expressed his displeasure over strong criticisms that business organisations had levelled at the B&W particularly since last September. The current B&W had paid attention to the "economic problem" of Groningen, intensively consulted with business organisations, changing the past procedure, and taken into account particularly the "economic interests", he argued. The procedure followed for the Plan Intermediate Step had been a "clear example" of this "chosen path". As proof of this, he referred to the fact that, both in the written opinions and at the consultations, "the procedure and the degree to which reactions were taken into account was in general greatly appreciated", as we indeed saw earlier. The proposal by the B&W actually showed "that the economic interests were thoroughly considered and that the earlier proposals were adjusted in many respects", he insisted. In addition, he frankly conceded that, as a result, the interests of residents were sacrificed:

I very well understand that our attempts to meet the wishes of the businesspeople have also made us vulnerable to criticism by residents' groups. (...) In place of making rigorously impossible all

through traffic that could emerge, we have also taken into account the interest of sufficient accessibility.

Particularly in relation to the closure of Leliesingel, he explained in detail how this idea had been brought forward. Referring to the meeting with the action committee on May 3rd, he read out the following passage in the minutes:

Being asked, they make it clear that they could also agree with Leliesingel being completely made car-free, on the condition that Oranjesingel could succeed the current function of Leliesingel and Kruissingel remains open in both directions.

In fact, "The other organisations" than the NCOV "did not distance themselves from the intended versions at least at that stage", and therefore he had understood that "we did not have to expect fierce opposition from organisations represented there". In addition, "they were explicitly even satisfied with some other adjustments", and "The conversation also proceeded at that moment in an extremely good atmosphere", he recalled.

That is why, the B&W felt "great disappointment" and "indignation" in September, when "large advertisements were placed" in the Gezinsbode, which almost conducted a "witch-hunt"²³⁴ against the B&W. In his view, "it seems not so reasonable that, whenever we take a decision that does not meet their wishes at 100 % or 98 % , they cast in our teeth, on the ground that we are obviously completely blind to the economic development of this city". Nevertheless, "We do not intend, based on the experience acquired with the Plan Intermediate Step, to draw the conclusion that intensive consultation has rather little meaning". Although "That has now turned out to be true!", according to T. Pitstra (PSP), Zunderdorp expressed his determination that "we will, as long as it is possible for us, continue to fulfil the broader responsibility". Given his other statements, it is clear that "the broader responsibility" was actually to advance the economic interests or, to be precise, to integrate opinions from the business community. In fact, he proposed another concession for shopkeepers on that day. In relation to the entrance to Nieuwe Ebbingestraat, the Decision-Making Plan, that is, the bill, maintained the objective itself of "diverting the main stream into Gedempte Boterdiep", although it did not stick to the "square version". Zunderdorp entirely abandoned this objective, and proposed a precondition for redesigning this place that "Gedempte Boterdiep and Nieuwe Ebbingestraat fulfil an equal traffic function".

As long as Leliesingel is concerned, however, he steadfastly maintained the policy of closing it, and furthermore clearly stood by residents, repeatedly emphasising measures against through traffic:

It is of course not the case (...) that, in the vision of the *college*, the car stream that now runs on Leliesingel must be shifted to Oranjesingel. As a result of the total traffic management in the planning area, the traffic stream that is oriented toward the related area will be considerably reduced. A prediction in this respect indicates that a reduction of 50 % can be achieved through guiding measures on the way. In our plan, remaining traffic will spread itself over some of the remaining opening routes. A part of that will go to Oranjesingel, particularly the part that has its destination on

Kerklaan, Nassaulaan or one of the streets behind them. It is therefore absolutely not the intention that inter-neighbourhood traffic with a character of through traffic is pressed through this neighbourhood by means of the slalom around Noorderplantsoen.

This statement is utterly inconsistent with not only the proposal in the Decision-Making Plan but also the explanation that he himself gave just before. The proposal in the Decision-Making Plan, that is, so-called MODEL 4 was originally intended to "improve" the Compromise Proposal so that it could garner support from the business community, and therefore its basic idea was precisely that "the car stream that now runs on Leliesingel must be shifted to Oranjesingel", relocating to Oranjesingel not only neighbourhood traffic but also "inter-neighbourhood traffic with a character of through traffic". That is why, the Decision-Making Plan proposed that safety in crossing Oranjesingel should be improved. On the other hand, the plan did not mention at all "a reduction of 50 %" through "guiding measures". So, Zunderdorp substantially proposed an entirely new plan concerning Noorderplantsoen at this council meeting to obtain support of the PPR and PSP.

The motion concerning Oranjesingel, which was proposed by the PSP, was "completely consistent with our intentions", he said, and again emphasised that "it is absolutely not the intention that the traffic stream is shifted to a route via Oranjesingel". In addition, although he did not want to pronounce a "preference for cutting" at this moment, he left the door open for it:

If it becomes clear from our consultation with the neighbourhood, the concerned and shopkeepers that we can find an ingenious solution that also meets all other objectives, we will not reject such a solution in advance. But I do not want to suggest that "cutting" is the most natural solution.

On the other hand, the motion concerning a speed limit of 30 km/h, which was also made by the PSP, was not accepted "in this form" by Zunderdorp, because "it is suggested that a speed limit of 30 km/h will be introduced in the whole of Hortusbuurt and Oranjebuurt". However, he did not dismiss a speed limit itself, saying that "It seems to me better to accept the underlying thinking in the motion and examine its possibility in working out the plan". He argued that, through taking measures against through traffic, the closure of Leliesingel obviously did not lead to a "disproportionate nuisance in the residential neighbourhood" on one hand and "such a harmful effect on accessibility" on the other, and turned down the demand of the CDA and VVD to postpone the decision:

The *college* is, after careful consideration, of the opinion that it will be obviously very well possible to secure sufficiently the three objectives mentioned earlier by me (traffic safety, livability of residential neighbourhoods and protection of the environment - by the author) (...), also within the version with which the park itself, at least Leliesingel (...) is made car-free, without leading to a disproportionate nuisance in the residential neighbourhood or to such a harmful effect on accessibility to shopping concentrations and some other businesses that they suffer damage that cannot be recovered.

Concerning the necessity to decide now, he also said that "in terms of the further plan

making and the measures that will be taken two years later, it is important to know what the municipal council ultimately desires about the park". Moreover, in response to the motion made by the PPR, he promised not to hesitate to close Leliesingel earlier, if circumstances allowed. According to him, there were "two time-consuming factors" related to the closure. One was to make a neighbourhood traffic plan for the area around Noorderplantsoen, and another was to secure finances for the implementation. Because of these factors, he could not promise definitely to close Leliesingel in 1987, as urged in the motion, but "we will not hesitate to take various measures earlier, particularly those related to Noorderplantsoen when, for example, sufficient resources become available from the municipality or elsewhere, which makes it possible to hasten the schedule". Because "We are indeed, at the end of the day, of the opinion that what is now proposed with regard to Noorderplantsoen will bring about improvements that you must not neglect longer than necessary".

Although Zunderdorp denied the prearrangement with the PPR and PSP, as reported in the Nieuwsblad, he substantially accepted the motions that these two parties made as conditions of their support for closing Leliesingel. In response, the PPR and PSP withdrew these motions, confirming the commitments by Zunderdorp as follows:

We can withdraw the motion concerning Oranjesingel based on the promises by the *college*. The *college* also wants no through traffic on Oranjesingel and wants to take measures for that. (Pitstra, PSP)

the *wethouder* promised to implement measures concerning Noorderplantsoen as soon as possible (...). Considering that this promise is sufficient for us, we withdraw the motion. (...)

It is clear, not only from the contribution of the PvdA²³⁵ but also from the promise by the *wethouder*, that the proposal that the municipal council will approve tonight will actually be implemented in Noorderplantsoen. This is very important for us. (Berends, PPR)

The municipal council then came to a vote, and all the remaining motions and amendments were rejected. Concerning the proposal by the B&W, in response to the demand of the VVD and CPN, the council first voted separately on Recommendation 3.2.1. and 3.2.3.(b), which were related to the closure of Leliesingel. These recommendations were approved by a vote of 20 to 19, with the PvdA, PPR, PSP and ex-CPNer N. Broekema supporting. The whole proposal of the B&W, including one proposed by Zunderdorp concerning Nieuwe Ebbingestraat, was also approved without voting by roll-call. In this way, the closure of Leliesingel, which had been the most controversial issue of traffic planning after the VCP, was approved by one vote, again like the VCP. However, unlike the VCP, this project still had to go through long twists and turns before it was finally realised.

8. Four Preconditions

8.1 Back to the starting point

At the local election on March 19th, 1986, the PvdA of Groningen, with Gietema putting in the first place in the candidate list as before, increased its seats by 3, winning 18 in total. This year, the PvdA won nationwide, and, compared to other cities, the victory of the PvdA of Groningen was "not remarkably great"²³⁶. Nevertheless, it won the most seats in its history, tying the record in 1974. Although the *college* partner CDA lost one seat, resulting in 6 seats, the PvdA again chose to form the B&W with the CDA. The municipal council approved the new B&W on April 29th, which consisted of four PvdA *wethouders* and two CDA *wethouders*, as before.

The election program of the PvdA, Municipal Program 1986-1990, did not mention specifically Noorderplantsoen, but substantially promised to close Leliesingel during this period, through stating that "During the coming councillors' tenure of office, the approved traffic plan for the northern neighbourhoods is implemented"²³⁷. Asked about the "traffic plan to close Noorderplantsoen" in the interview by the Gezinsbode before the election, Gietema himself also answered that the B&W would implement it during the next tenure of office:

There is a decision by the municipal council. The coming *college* will implement it, presumably. But some steps will have to be still taken, and we will also have to see once again well the price tag. We will indeed also talk to the neighbourhood about various measures. Around 1989/ 1990, it could be implemented.²³⁸

However, the new *college* program, which was agreed between the PvdA and the CDA, had fundamentally changed the decision by the municipal council concerning Noorderplantsoen. In "2.5. Traffic and transport", the program first states that "During this term of office, the decisions taken by the municipal council concerning the Plan Intermediate Step are implemented", like the election program of the PvdA, and then adds the following "Note":

The proposal to the municipal council, Intermediate Step, mentions the following starting points²³⁹ for making the neighbourhood traffic plan Noorderplantsoen and its environs:

1. heightening the recreational value of Noorderplantsoen (closing Leliesingel);
2. preventing through traffic in the adjacent neighbourhoods;
3. maintaining accessibility by car to businesses and shopping concentrations;
4. traffic safety.

Therefore, the text in itself does not exclude the possibility that the plan to close Leliesingel is not implemented in the future when it is clear that, with the closure, disproportionate damage is caused to one or more of the three other starting points. The CDA, however, continues to emphasise the equality of the four starting points. This means that the party group of the CDA (...) reserves its voting behaviour concerning the closure of Leliesingel.²⁴⁰

This Note is clearly based not on the bill, Model (a), which was actually proposed to the municipal council and approved on January 15th, but the alternative bill, Model (b). That is why, this Note evidently violates the decision by the municipal council, and is evidently contrary to what Zunderdorp argued at that municipal council meeting. As

mentioned earlier, he stated that it was "obviously very well possible" to close Leliesingel, while realising the above starting points 2 to 4, and therefore also said that "you must not neglect longer than necessary". The policy stipulated in this Note had completely taken the discussion about Noorderplantsoen back to literally its starting point. In addition, according to the latter half of the Note, the CDA seems to maintain the minority opinion concerning this policy. However, this Note, precisely as the CDA wishes, regards the four starting points as equal, and reserves the decision on the closure of Leliesingel.

It is unclear whether this replacement of the bill was just caused by misunderstanding, or intentionally made by leaders of the PvdA and CDA who negotiated about forming the B&W. In the file that the municipality keeps now, Model (b) is first filed, which is just handwritten "model b" in small letters in the margin. In addition, from 1985 to 1986, the municipality was being engaged in drastically restructuring the municipal organisation, and the Department of Urban Development and Housing, which had been in charge of the Plan Intermediate Step, was consolidated with the Department of Public Works into the Department of Urban Planning²⁴¹. On this opportunity, the top position of this department was entirely renewed on the initiative of Gietema, and B. Ouwerkerk was appointed general director, who had been a director of the Department of Social Services and Employment. This drastic change in the organisation might also have contributed to allowing a simple but serious misunderstanding to happen.

On the other hand, there is also the possibility that this replacement of the bill was intentional. Purely judging from the result of the election, the PvdA did not have to concede to the CDA at all. In fact, when Gietema explained the process of negotiations on the coming B&W at the municipal council meeting on April 29th, he emphasised that the PvdA had kept the upper hand in negotiations. According to him, the CDA at first demanded "traffic" as the portfolio of the *wethouder*. "The PvdA, however, as the won party, did not want to surrender to the lost party this policy area, over which unbelievably many political discussions have developed". That is why, the PvdA opened negotiations with the VVD to see the possibility to form the B&W with this party. Afterwards, the CDA sent the PvdA a letter, in which the CDA gave up the portfolio "traffic" to the PvdA and just asked the PvdA to "make a gesture". Because "such a thing is not difficult for us at all", the PvdA resumed negotiations with the CDA and both parties had reached an agreement about *wethouders* and the *college* program, which adopted "The main points from the election program of the PvdA", Gietema explained. On the other hand, the party group leader of the CDA, J.J. Matthijsse, conceded that the CDA had been forced many concessions:

Negotiations in the proportion of 18 to 6 mean that you must have a large extent of preparedness to seek compromises concerning problems that keep on dividing both groups. It was clear that the CDA had wished otherwise concerning various issues mentioned earlier.

However, Pitstra of the PSP, which had been excluded from the negotiations, interpreted differently the process and result. According to him, "Because Gietema,

however, wanted to pair with the CDA so much, he himself had to finally compromise with the CDA". The result of the negotiations was "more than a gesture" and even the "best" for the CDA, he argued. Indeed, the CDA secured two *wethouders* as before, despite its electoral defeat. The Gezinsbode, reviewing the negotiations in retrospect, also pointed out that "A large part of the PvdA and leader Gietema were unmistakably in favour of the CDA", mainly because of the "quality of the party group of the VVD and particularly the candidates of the VVD for *wethouders*"²⁴². That is why, although the CDA indeed lost the election, it was possibly not inferior in negotiations on the B&W, and could substantially influence the content of the *college* program in its favour. In addition, while Gietema indicated, in the above statement, that there had been no room to yield to the CDA in traffic planning, he himself was "actually against" closing Leliesingel, but just could "not permit himself, as party leader, a different standpoint"²⁴³. Also in the interview by the author, he frankly conceded that "I didn't like it". He was to take charge of traffic as well as urban planning in the new B&W²⁴⁴. So, as a result of the pressing demand of the CDA on one hand and Gietema's positive acceptance of that demand on the other, the bill was replaced with Model (b) and the above passage was, by means of the "Note", slipped into the *college* program, it can also be presumed.

Whether mistakenly or intentionally, this *college* program contained a serious content for those individuals and organisations that had asked for closing Noorderplantsoen to cars. Strangely enough, however, as long as the Note is concerned, no controversy aroused within the PvdA, at the municipal council and among the public. At the general member meeting of the PvdA on April 24th, which discussed the *college* program, the discussion was rather dominated by a speaking time limit at the municipal council and council committees, which was also contained in the *college* program and unfavourable for the minority parties. After all, the chairman concluded that "the election program of the PvdA is recognised in this *college* program more than ever before"²⁴⁵, and the *college* program was approved. At the municipal council meeting on April 29th, the *college* program itself was not handed among councillors, while both Gietema and Matthijsse insisted that only Noorderplantsoen remained a "pending question" between two parties. That is, the PvdA and CDA adhered to their existing positions concerning Noorderplantsoen, according to them, and the discussion was again centred on a speaking time limit. On the other hand, the Nieuwsblad dated April 23rd carried the headline, "Through the text of the *college* program 1986-1990/ Uncertainty about closing Noorderplantsoen", and, quoting the Note, pointed out that, with the *college* program, "the possibility is created to reconsider the decision taken by the smallest majority to close Leliesingel". However, the article was small. In addition, although this *college* program must have been a piece of good news for the Gezinsbode, which had consistently expressed suspicion about closing Noorderplantsoen, it did not report the Note at all.

As a result, this Note hardly attracted attention when the *college* program was

published, but afterwards this interpretation of the decision by the municipal council had been accepted, and the policy stipulated in the Note had been widely recognised as consistent with the decision by the municipal council.

8.2 Inactivity

In September, however, when the new B&W sent to the Department of Urban Planning a letter, which directed to work out the Plan Intermediate Step, it correctly reinterpreted the decision by the council and the *college* program. In one of five "sub-assignments", "5. Neighbourhood traffic plan Oranjewijk/ closing Leliesingel", the letter first lists together those proposals listed separately in Recommendation 3.2.1., 3.2.2. and 3.2.3. in the Decision-Making Plan. These are the "starting points", which the neighbourhood traffic plan for Oranjewijk has to meet. Among them is of course included the proposal of "making Leliesingel car-free". Concerning Oranjesingel, however, the letter deletes the phrase "possibly taking some other small measures for the sake of the neighbourhood opening function", which indicated an increase in through traffic. Then, it states that the *college* program has put forward the "following starting points", lists those four starting points, and argues that "These starting points must also be done justice to as well as possible". This is indeed the maximum that the *college* program could say within the framework of the decision by the municipal council. "The definitive neighbourhood traffic plan must be completed in December 1987", and the letter directs the department to conduct a "license number investigation"²⁴⁶ as the first step to make the plan.

Before long, however, such a strict distinction between the decision by the municipal council and the *college* program had disappeared, and the four starting points based on the latter had dominated the discussion about Noorderplantsoen. Far from making the neighbourhood traffic plan, it was sporadically just repeated that it was possible to close Leliesingel, while meeting the four starting points, although the B&W ought to have already reached this conclusion in December 1985, when it decided the proposal to the municipal council.

The Department of Urban Planning carried out an "extensive license number investigation" in November 1986. Based on this result, supplementing with "some visual node and section counts" and "mechanical counts"²⁴⁷, the department drafted the Traffic Investigation Noorderplantsoen²⁴⁸ in November 1987. This report, in "1. Introduction", interprets the decision by the municipal council in such a manner that the *college* program did:

The proposal to the municipal council, Intermediate Step, led to the decision to close Leliesingel and make the neighbourhood traffic plan Noorderplantsoen and its environs, to which the following starting points were attached:

- (a) heightening the recreational value of Noorderplantsoen;
- (b) preventing through traffic in the adjacent neighbourhoods;
- (c) maintaining accessibility by car to businesses and shopping concentrations;
- (d) traffic safety.

It argues that "The chosen version: closing Leliesingel and keeping Kruissingel open, leads to meeting the starting points (a) and (c)", as if these two measures alone could, as a matter of course, ensure these starting points. Therefore, this report examines "to what extent no 'disproportionate damage' is caused to the starting points (b) and (d), through implementing these measures"²⁴⁹, it says. In fact, the following examination is almost exclusively dedicated to the starting point (b), that is, the issue concerning through traffic.

According to the report, the department first of all examined a case of "just closing Leliesingel, without additional measures". "The most important conclusion" is that this "leads to a heavy load for Oranjesingel and Nieuwe Boteringestraat"²⁵⁰. However, it had been again and again pointed out since the Discussion Plan in May 1984 that "additional (or guiding) measures" were necessary in closing Noorderplantsoen, and particularly Zunderdorp argued at the municipal council meeting in January 1986 that traffic reaching the adjacent neighbourhoods could be reduced by 50 % with these measures. The report successively puts forward the following "package of traffic measures" to prevent such an increase in through traffic:

- (a) improving the flow of traffic on the western and northern ring roads;
- (b) reconstructing the route Bedumerweg - Boterdiep, connecting Boteringesingel to Nieuwe Ebbingestraat/ Noorderstationsstraat in a less attractive manner;
- (c) one-way traffic (into the inner city) on Visserbrug;
- (d) car traffic in an opposite direction on Turfsingel between Ebbingebrug and Boterdiep;
- (e) surfacing Prinsesseweg and Wilhelminakade with asphalt;
- (f) streamlining the route Eeldersingel - Eendrachtskade (northern side) - Hoendiep into the western ring road and vice versa, in combination with the reconstruction of Westerhaven;
- (g) streamlining the route Trompsingel - Bontebrug - Europaweg;
- (h) taking measures to facilitate the flow of traffic on Kapteynbrug on the route Petrus Campersingel - Kapteynlaan (adjusting traffic signals);
- (i) reconstructing Herman Coleniusbrug.

Concerning the route Bedumerweg - Boterdiep, the report assumes that it is streamlined "based on the Plan Intermediate Step", but argues that "A more fundamental reconstruction through taking the Rodeweg-trace makes this route much more attractive"²⁵¹. The approved Plan Intermediate Step, however, dismissed both of these measures as well as the measure (d). The report estimates that existing traffic on Leliesingel would be distributed as in Table 2, if it is closed in combination with the above measures. The routes in the adjacent neighbourhoods, that is, 3, 4 and 5, carry 40 % in total. In other words, traffic is reduced by 60 % before reaching the neighbourhoods. Although traffic is reduced more than argued thus far, the measure of streamlining the route Bedumerweg - Boterdiep and measure (d) must contribute to this reduction. In addition, the above "package of traffic measures" does not include measures taken within the neighbourhoods. Particularly, regarding Oranjesingel, to which Zunderdorp promised not to shift through traffic at the municipal council, the report just says that "crossings for pedestrians"²⁵² are provided. The report, however,

concludes that, with the package of traffic measures, it is possible to close Leliesingel without increasing through traffic in the adjacent neighbourhoods:

The closure of Leliesingel, in combination with a package of additional traffic measures, can lead to the acceptable distribution of "Leliesingel-traffic" over the ring roads and accessibility routes. The adjacent neighbourhoods are only to a limited extent burdened. The additional traffic measures form an essential precondition.²⁵³

1. northern and western ring roads	19 %
2. eastern ring road	2 %
3. Zonnelaan - Prinsesseweg - Wilhelminakade	9 %
4. Oranjesingel - Kruissingel	15 %
5. Boteringestraat - Diepenring	16 %
6. Boterdiep - Diepenring	11 %
7. Ebbingestraat - Diepenring (only from the north to the south)	2 %
8. W.A. Scholtenstraat - Bloemstraat	7 %
9. other routes, particularly Eikenlaan, Petrus Campersingel - Sumatralaan - Kapteynlaan, southern ring road, Trompsingel	19 %
Total	100 %

Table 2: The estimated distribution of Leliesingel traffic (Traffic Investigation)

To sum up, this report does not well take into account the past discussion, which had been going on since the Discussion Plan and had culminated in the decision by the municipal council. It seems to examine from scratch, relying only on the *college* program, and, as a result, just echoes the conclusion that the B&W already reached two years ago. Necessarily, the implementation had to be postponed. Because "the conditions for closing Leliesingel can not be realised in the short term", the report suggests that the closure should be postponed "to around 1991"²⁵⁴.

The report was not decided by the B&W, and probably not published²⁵⁵. The Gezinsbode did not report this at all, while the Nieuwsblad reported only its part that was negative about closing Leliesingel. Without mentioning the condition, "without additional measures", the Nieuwsblad just reported that "It has become clear from an investigation by the municipality that only 10 to 15 percent of traffic would shift to the ring road when Noorderplantsoen is closed", and warned that "the danger of through traffic threatens in the adjacent neighbourhoods". "Because of the high cost of the plan and anxiety about complaints a la the notorious traffic circulation plan (VCP), the closure has been given a low priority within the *college van B en W*", and "The enthusiasm for the closure, which has already been waning, further declines with this investigation"²⁵⁶, according to this article.

Besides this report, the Department of Urban Planning investigated traffic on each route in 1985 and 1987 to see the effects of the opening of the eastern ring road, that is, the whole ring road system, in September 1986. According to this result, traffic on the route through Noorderplantsoen had increased by 3.2 %. Those who opposed closing this route had insisted that the completion of the ring roads would dramatically reduce

traffic in Noorderplantsoen, making the closure unnecessary any more. That is why, this result meant that "One of the most important arguments of the opponents (...) is dropped", but "in terms of policy, no announcement is made"²⁵⁷ by the B&W. The municipality also commissioned the CIMK to investigate the effects of closing Leliesingel on surrounding shopping streets and businesses. According to this result, which was informed of early in 1988, because the shopping street Kerklaan "has anyhow a decreased beyond-neighbourhood function"²⁵⁸, "The negative effect, if any, on sales will be then also less than anticipated at first". There is a "risk of losing about 5 % of sales", and the actual loss will be a "part of this". Also concerning businesses on Wilhelminakade, "the closure of Leliesingel itself will hardly have a negative effect on sales", and the loss of sales will be "At most 2 %"²⁵⁹, it expects.

That is why, in 1987 and early in 1988, some investigations presented results that were in favour of the closure of Leliesingel, although they actually just confirmed what had been argued since before. The B&W, however, did not even start the discussion with the neighbourhoods concerned about the neighbourhood traffic plan, while "The definitive neighbourhood traffic plan must be completed in December 1987", as it said before. The VROV of the PvdA discussed the issue concerning Noorderplantsoen after a long interval on February 16th, 1988. While "The present councillors have their suspicions about the closure", "The rest of the working group", referring to the above investigations, pressed for closing Leliesingel, and raised objections about postponing the implementation to the next councillors' tenure of office, on the ground that "the advantages are known, it has been discussed frequently enough and it already stays long enough in our election program"²⁶⁰.

In April, the Neighbourhood Association Noorderplantsoenbuurt sent the B&W a letter, which pressed for closing Leliesingel quickly. In this letter, the association points out that "any preparatory measure has come to nothing", although the municipal council decided the closure more than two years ago. Until now, "we have been consistently kept in suspense with new investigations one after another", and, through contact with "responsible civil servants", "It has also become clear for us that any money has been reserved neither for this year nor for the coming years to implement additional traffic measures (neighbourhood traffic plan, Ebbingestraat - Boterdiep, Westerhaven, Wilhelminakade)". The association criticises responsible *wethouder* Gietema for "ignoring the decision taken by the municipal council", and urges the B&W "to take all the necessary measures in order to implement from today the will of the municipal council, in accordance with the democratic rules of the game politically applied in the Netherlands". In May, the PPR/EVP and PSP asked for closing Leliesingel at the municipal council committee Urban Planning.

Maybe in response to these demands from within and without the PvdA, Gietema in June prepared a "Memorandum"²⁶¹ about the closure of Leliesingel for the municipal council committee Urban Planning. At the beginning, he quotes the four starting points

in the *college* program as if they belonged to the decision by the municipal council:

The decision by the municipal council concerning the Plan Intermediate Step led to the basic decision in March²⁶² 1986 to close Leliesingel to car traffic and make the neighbourhood traffic plan Noorderplantsoen and its environs, to which the following starting points were attached:

- (a) heightening the recreational value of Noorderplantsoen;
- (b) preventing through traffic in the adjacent neighbourhoods;
- (c) maintaining accessibility by car to businesses and shopping concentrations;
- (d) traffic safety.

Successively, he examines the possibility of closing Leliesingel in terms of each of these starting points, but what he says is at most the summary of the Traffic Investigation Noorderplantsoen drafted the previous year. His "Conclusion" is, as argued again and again, that "The closure of Leliesingel to car traffic is possible within the starting points imposed by the municipal council, if some additional traffic measures are taken".

At the annual general meeting of the PvdA in November, the party group leader Piet Huisman²⁶³ announced that the party group had decided, as its own policy, to postpone the closure of Leliesingel to "1991 or 1992". The reason was that the Plan of Approach for the Inner City²⁶⁴ and the Plan Groningen Node of Traffic and Transport²⁶⁵, both of which were being prepared, "must make clear what the possibilities and results of the closure are not only financially but also in terms of traffic", and "Particularly the latter must show what kind of measures are necessary to be able to carry through the closure without imposing the burden of through traffic on the neighbourhoods"²⁶⁶. As long as car traffic is concerned, however, the Plan of Approach almost exclusively deals with the parking policy in the inner city, and its draft had already been published in April the same year. The latter Plan Groningen Node was a traffic plan for the whole city area, succeeding the Plan Traffic and Transport, and its Discussion Plan was published in March next year, 1989. This plan indeed mentions the closure of Leliesingel, but its content is just a very short summary of the Traffic Investigation Noorderplantsoen. Actually referring to the Traffic Investigation, it argues that this report showed that "just implementing this measure", that is, the closure of Leliesingel, "leads to the shift of traffic to adjacent residential neighbourhoods". The plan lists the following measures that should be taken in closing Leliesingel:

- improving the flow of traffic on the western and northern ring roads;
- reconstructing the route Bedumerweg - Boterdiep - Diepenring;
- reconstructing the route Trompsingel - Bontebrug - Europaweg;
- surfacing Prinsesseweg and Wilhelminakade with asphalt.²⁶⁷

So, nothing new is proposed. Finally, in November 1989, a new investigation concerning the closure was reported. The bridge in front of the southern entrance to Noorderplantsoen, Plantsoenbrug, was to be closed for a long period because of the restoration. Catching this opportunity, the Department of Urban Planning investigated the change of traffic to predict indirectly the effect of closing Leliesingel. As a result, it was found out that the ring roads were chosen as alternative routes more than expected,

and the department concluded that "the drivers seem to have discovered the pleasures of the ring roads"²⁶⁸.

8.3 The Progress Report

In February 1st, 1990, that is, just before the local election in March, Gietema presented the Progress Report: Closing Leliesingel, Upgrading Noorderplantsoen²⁶⁹, which was prepared by the Department of Urban Planning. This report, as in the past documents, first of all refers to the four starting points, which are here called "preconditions"²⁷⁰:

The decision to close Leliesingel has been linked to four preconditions in various discussions:

- the recreational value of the park must be enlarged;
- through traffic must be prevented in the adjacent neighbourhoods;
- accessibility to the shopping and business concentrations must be maintained;
- the closure must not lead to less traffic safety.

This report proves that "each of these preconditions can be fulfilled"²⁷¹, it says, and successively explains how each condition can be met. First, it argues that, while the closure "itself leads to enlarging the recreational value", the "redesign" of the park is desirable, and proposes concrete measures such as "narrowing the width of asphalt"²⁷² on Leliesingel. Second, the report examines the issue concerning through traffic, to which the most pages are dedicated. It lists "various investigations" conducted thus far for this issue:

1. During the period 1986 - 1987, an investigation was carried out into the origin and destination of car traffic on Leliesingel.
2. These data were supplemented with visual node and section counts and mechanical counts.
3. Finally, an investigation was carried out into the effects of the temporary closure of Plantsoenbrug on the flow of traffic through and around Noorderplantsoen.

Understandably, it is only the investigation mentioned in 3 that had been conducted since the Traffic Investigation was prepared more than two years before. Like the Traffic Investigation, the report argues that "closing Leliesingel without additional measures leads to too heavy a load for particularly Oranjesingel and Nieuwe Boteringestraat", and puts forward the following "package of traffic measures":

1. Various traffic measures in Oranjewijk and Hortusbuurt;
2. Introducing one-way traffic on Visserbrug (into the inner city);
3. Improving the flow of traffic on the western ring road;
4. Streamlining the connection Bedumerweg - Boterdiep;
5. Reconstructing Westerhaven, in combination with;
6. Streamlining the route Eeldersingel - Eendrachtsskade northern side and vice versa;
7. Reconstructing Wilhelminakade between Herman Colleniusbrug and Plantsoenbrug (surfacing with asphalt, introducing bicycle paths);
8. Adjusting the traffic signals on Kapteynbrug/ Van Doeverenplein (facilitating the flow of traffic on Petrus Campersingel);
9. Reconstructing Prinsesseweg (surfacing with asphalt, introducing bicycle paths).

1. Oranjesingel	16 %
2. Nieuwe Boteringestraat	15 %
3. Prinsesseweg - Wilhelminakade	9 %
4. ring roads	21 %
5. Boterdiep	11 %
6. other routes	28 %
Total	100 %

Table 3: The estimated distribution of Leliesingel traffic (Progress Report)

These measures are also, except for 1, almost the same as those proposed in the Traffic Investigation. Therefore, the estimated distribution of existing traffic on Leliesingel (Table 3) is necessarily almost the same as that in the previous report. The conclusion is again the same: "closing Leliesingel, in combination with additional measures, burdens the adjacent neighbourhoods only to a limited extent". It, however, refers to the investigation into the effects of the temporary closure of Plantsoenbrug, and expresses an optimistic expectation that "an actual increase in traffic in the neighbourhoods will be perhaps still less"²⁷³ than shown in Table 3. In fact, the closure of Leliesingel could have a substantially different effect on the choice of routes by drivers than that of Plantsoenbrug. On the other hand, concerning 1, that is, measures taken within the neighbourhoods, the report lists the following, distinguishing between "necessary" measures and "desirable" measures:

Necessary

- (a) On some routes, one-way traffic is reversed. (...)
- (b) The northern entrance to Boteringesingel is closed to traffic. (...)
- (c) Various measures to restrain speed are taken on Boteringesingel and Kruissingel. (...)
- (d) Leliesingel is closed to car traffic.
- (e) The connection Kerklaan - Oranjesingel is reconstructed.
- (f) Noorderplantsoen fulfils particularly a function for the adjacent residential neighbourhoods. Therefore, special attention is paid to strengthening the relationships between these neighbourhoods and the park, particularly for slow traffic. In this framework, the easiness in crossing various roads in the neighbourhoods will be improved. We mention here particularly Prinsesseweg, Nassaulaan, Koninginnelaan and Oranjesingel.
- (g) At the connection Nassaulaan - Oranjesingel, traffic between these roads acquires a priority over traffic going straight on Oranjesingel. In addition, a traffic hump is placed here on Oranjesingel.

Desirable

- (h) Noorderbuitensingel acquires a loop on the side of Noorderstationsstraat. (...)
- (i) Oranjesingel is provided with a so-called entrance design²⁷⁴ on the side of Wilhelminakade.
- (j) The intersection of Prinsesseweg, Wilhelminakade and Herman Colleniusbrug is reconstructed in such a manner that the area of the intersection is significantly reduced. (...)

As long as Oranjesingel is concerned, measures that are clearly aimed at restraining through traffic are only (g) after "In addition" and (i), and the latter is just "desirable". According to (g), it seems that through traffic is just relocated from Oranjesingel to the route Nassaulaan - Oranjesingel. Moreover, after listing these measures, the report says that "During the plan making, these measures are discussed with the residents and businesspeople concerned"²⁷⁵, indicating that the consultation with the neighbourhoods

has not yet started.

Concerning the third issue, that is, "Accessibility to Businesses and Shopping Concentrations", "We are then also of the opinion that, after closing Leliesingel, the businesses and shopping concentrations in the adjacent neighbourhoods remain well accessible by car", the report states. It puts forward two grounds for this view, that is, the investigation by the CIMK in 1988, as mentioned earlier, and written opinions submitted by business organisations with regard to the Discussion Plan Groningen Node. According to these written opinions, the Committee Freight Traffic Province Groningen²⁷⁶ states that "it agrees with the closure of the park, on the condition that the guiding measures mentioned in the plan are implemented", and the KvK "takes a similar standpoint"²⁷⁷. Only the GOF-KNOV expresses a different tone, the report says. However, referring to the summary by the municipality of these written opinions, which is attached to the Definitive Plan Groningen Node, the KvK just asks for maintaining accessibility to businesses, and the Committee Freight Traffic Province Groningen seems to just press for realising the four starting points or preconditions, not "the guiding measures". The GOF-KNOV indeed clearly opposes the closure:

In relation to the proposed closure of Leliesingel to car traffic, it is a precondition that accessibility to businesses in the area remains guaranteed. There must be also a good alternative for traffic between neighbourhoods. (KvK)²⁷⁸

The committee agrees to concentrating through car traffic on main arteries and managing neighbourhood traffic via the neighbourhood opening structure. The closure of Leliesingel, which is proposed in this context, is acceptable only if the preconditions mentioned in the plan are met. (Committee Freight Traffic Province Groningen)²⁷⁹

It sticks to the standpoint that the closure of Leliesingel will lead to the shift of traffic to the adjacent neighbourhoods. Considering that this is not desirable, the route through Noorderplantsoen must remain open for motorised traffic. (GOF-KNOV)²⁸⁰

Fourth, the report argues that traffic safety will be improved within Noorderplantsoen, not only on Leliesingel but also on Kruissingel, because of a decrease in car traffic resulting from the closure. Concerning the surrounding area, although "some routes" will see an increase in traffic, these routes can already manage this increase safely, or will be able to, thanks to the "above mentioned package of measures". For example, "in Oranjewijk, various measures are taken to restrain traffic"²⁸¹, it says. However, it is questionable whether the measures against through traffic can be called "various" based on those listed above. Finally, in conclusion, the report states that "we have made clear how the preconditions can be fulfilled", and mentions the succeeding procedure. "We present a proposal to the municipal council this year, in which the measures are described in a definitive form". "Those measures necessary for the closure can be implemented in the middle of 1992", and "Immediately after that, Leliesingel can be closed to car traffic"²⁸², it concludes.

Considering these contents, this report was by no means the product of the continuous investigations and consultations that should have followed after the decision by the

municipal council in January 1986. It seems that this report was rather urgently drafted by the Department of Urban Planning at the request of Gietema, who had to show those within and without the PvdA, with the election near at hand, that the B&W was indeed engaged in closing Leliesingel. All four *wethouders* of the PvdA supported this report, while two *wethouders* of the CDA refrained from their approval. When Gietema presented this report, he urged the CDA to choose: "it has now enough data to articulate its judgement about the closure. If it is still against the closure, it must say why"²⁸³. While this report, however, was not decided by the B&W, the election took place.

Gietema had taken the discussion about Noorderplantsoen back to its starting point, had made little effort to close it and only made a gesture in favour of the closure at the last moment of his tenure of office. Viewing from a different angle, however, he and some councillors of the PvdA, who were also against the closure, could not completely cancel the closure. Because it was a matter of common knowledge that the municipal council had indeed decided to close Leliesingel, whatever interpretations were given to the decision later, and there were party members of the PvdA who had consistently asked for implementing that decision. That is why, the Election Program 1990 - 1994 of the PvdA of Groningen professed that "Particularly, the closure of Leliesingel to car traffic must be completed"²⁸⁴, and the Progress Report clearly scheduled the closure for "the middle of 1992".

In response to this report, the *Gezinsbode* dated February 2nd, 1990, carried an editorial with the title: "Political heritage". It points out that, after the decision by the municipal council, "the question was only when and how the closure would take place". Because "it was from the beginning obvious that it had to be done, considering the political importance of the closure for the PvdA, which has advocated it in its election program for years". In fact, the Action Committee Northern Neighbourhoods, which had waged a bitter campaign against the closure, entirely suspended its action after the decision, judging from newspaper articles. Or, among the written opinions concerning the Plan Groningen Node, that by the GOF-KNOV indeed opposed the closure, but other two opinions did not oppose so strenuously as before. The editorial in the *Gezinsbode* still raises an objection against the closure: "Millions that the plan for Noorderplantsoen will cost would be better spent on further diluting the VCP". However, it concedes that "it is in fact a (politically) lost discussion", and concludes with, in a sense, a declaration of defeat: "Leliesingel will now undoubtedly become car-free".

That is why, it seemed that the closure of Leliesingel would finally be realised by the new B&W after the election. The result of this election, however, had brought about new hurdles that had to be overcome to implement the closure.

9. The Car-Free Park

9.1 Earthshaking changes

The local election on March 21st, 1990, had caused nationwide a drastic change in the makeup of municipal councils, which was called "earthshaking changes"²⁸⁵. That is, a resounding defeat of the PvdA, and in exchange a great victory of the D66 and Groen Links, which was established through the consolidation of the CPN, EVP, PPR and PSP just before the election. Groningen was not free from this change, and the PvdA, after the historical victory at the last election, suffered a historical defeat, winning only 11 seats, that is, losing as many as 7 seats. On the other hand, the Groen Links, which the CPN of Groningen had not yet joined²⁸⁶, increased its seats from 3 to 7, jumping to the second largest party, and the D66 tripled its seats from 2 to 6. The CDA, which had formed the B&W with the PvdA, maintained its seats (6), but increased the percentage of votes from 14.3 % to 15.5 %, for the first time reversing the declining trend since the 1960s.

Although the PvdA still remained the dominant party and negotiated about the new B&W with the CDA and D66, such an electoral result naturally forced the PvdA to concede substantially to the other two parties. Concerning *wethouders*, the PvdA got 3 posts, losing one post, while the total number of posts were increased from 6 to 7, so that the CDA and D66 could equally secure 2 posts respectively. The portfolio of traffic, for which the PvdA had been in charge since the 1970s, arousing many controversies, was handed over to Frans Hasselaar of the D66. He was also appointed *wethouder* of economy. This means that a *wethouder* who would communicate with the business community most intensively was to take charge of the most sensitive issue for the business community in Groningen. The *college* program also well reflected the views of the CDA and D66. Particularly concerning Noorderplantsoen, the CDA had consistently opposed closing it to cars, while the D66 reconfirmed, in advance of the negotiations on the B&W, its view that bicycle paths should be realised, with the park remaining open for cars. As a result, it is stipulated in the *college* program that Leliesingel is first of all closed as an experiment, and, if the result is negative, the road is again opened for cars.

The decision in 1986 to close Leliesingel to car traffic is implemented during this councillors' tenure of office, on the condition that it will be implemented as an experimental closure²⁸⁷. This experiment begins after the traffic measures necessary in other respects (for example, Westerhaven, Bedumerweg, the western ring road, surfacing Wilhelminakade with asphalt, and so on) are taken.

If it becomes clear during this experiment that a traffic nuisance emerges, which can not be prevented with any additional measures, then the previous situation returns. Otherwise, a neighbourhood park is realised.²⁸⁸

In response to the demand of the D66, the program also states that a committee is established to investigate the possibility of a referendum.

9.2 Measures against through traffic

That is why, after the local election in 1990, unstable factors had emerged for closing Leliesingel. On the other hand, the closure of Leliesingel, even if experimental, was to be certainly implemented during next four years. Facing such a circumstance, like just before the VCP was introduced, the business community suspended its opposition campaign and, furthermore, started to cooperate on the implementation to minimise the harmful effects. As a result, the municipality could address anxiety about through traffic among residents more seriously than before.

After the Progress Report was published, business organisations did not respond, but residents of Oranjebuurt, getting support from the Department of Urban Planning, prepared the report, *The Alternative?*²⁸⁹, in November 1990 and submitted it to the new *wethouder* Hasselaar. According to it, the Working Group Traffic Oranjebuurt, which wrote this report, is the "continuation" of the working group that submitted a written opinion about the Plan Intermediate Step, and "The concrete reason for reviving the Working Group Traffic was the Progress Report"²⁹⁰. Referring to the "history" since the Plan Intermediate Step, *The Alternative?* recalls that "Because the interests of Oranjebuurt and Hortusbuurt conformed with those of the business community, a monstrous alliance was established between these parties". After all, "the politics decided the closure only by one vote on January 15th, 1986, on the condition that some preconditions were fulfilled"²⁹¹. To guarantee these four preconditions, the municipality promised in those days to draft the neighbourhood traffic plan, it says, but "nothing has been done about it until now". On the other hand, however, the Progress Report was published, which has produced "huge unrest"²⁹².

The Alternative? denies every argument put forward in the Progress Report concerning how each precondition is fulfilled, calling the Progress Report the "Backward Report"²⁹³. It particularly refutes the section related to through traffic. That is, "It does not concretely show what kind of measures must be taken in Oranjebuurt and Hortusbuurt". Although it is assumed that the ring roads would carry 21 % of existing traffic on Leliesingel, "This percentage is unacceptably low", considering "tens of millions of guilders" spent on the ring roads. In addition, it dismisses as "built on a quicksand"²⁹⁴ the optimistic expectation based on the investigation into the effects of the closure of Plantsoenbrug. It insists that "coherent measures, much more than mentioned in the Progress Report, are necessary" to prevent the closure of Leliesingel from bringing a "still larger stream of through traffic in Oranjebuurt"²⁹⁵. Concretely, it presses for a "speed limit of 30 km/h in the whole of Oranjebuurt and Schildersbuurt"²⁹⁶, and proposes various measures for each road, supplementing with illustrations (Figure 18). The following are proposals for Prinsesseweg, Nassaulaan and Oranjesingel, on all of which residents have particularly worried about an increase in through traffic:

Prinsesseweg

- introducing a speed limit of 30 km/h;
- narrowing the road way;
- introducing bicycle paths;

- building mini roundabouts (particularly at the intersections of Prinsesseweg and Nassaulaan and of Prinsesseweg and Wilhelminakade) or completely reconstructing through improving the crossings for pedestrians (*Bijlage VII*);
- connecting to side streets with an entrance design;
- surfacing with asphalt (ZOAB²⁹⁷);
- improving the flow of traffic on the western ring road. (Prinsesseweg is by no means an alternative to the western ring road!)²⁹⁸

Nassaulaan

- introducing a speed limit of 30 km/h;
- introducing bicycle paths;
- improving the crossings for pupils and those going to Noorderplantsoen;
- building a mini roundabout at the intersection of Prinsesseweg and Nassaulaan;
- improving the intersection with Koninginnelaan;
- reconstructing the intersection with Oranjesingel (*Bijlage VIII*);
- introducing one-way traffic from Oranjesingel to Koninginnelaan, in combination with one-way traffic on Herman Colleniusbrug between Jan Lutmastraat and Dr. C. Hofstede de Grootkade.

Oranjesingel

- introducing a speed limit of 30 km/h;
- introducing bicycle paths;
- reconstructing the intersection with Nassaulaan (*Bijlage VIII*);
- placing a speed hump on the southern part of Oranjesingel;
- (...)
- bringing the crossings for pupils and those going to Noorderplantsoen;
- connecting to side streets with an entrance design;
- (...).

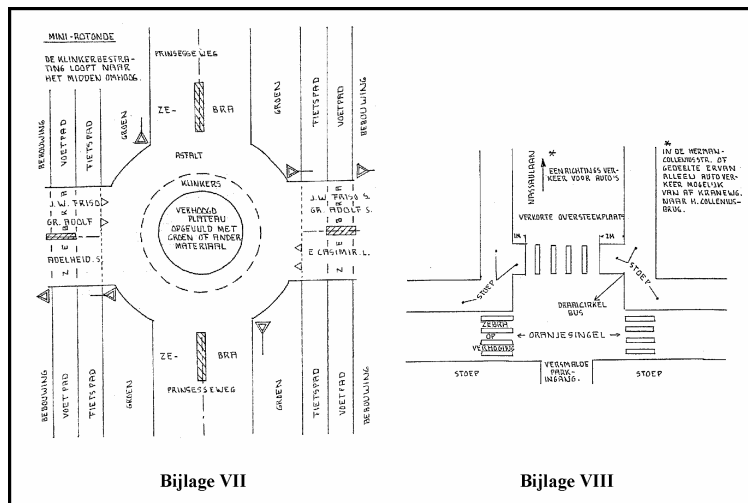


Figure 18: Proposals by Oranjebuurt

In this report, residents do not explicitly oppose closing Leliesingel, but they are by no means enthusiastic about it. For example, it mentions concerning the "third precondition", that is, accessibility to businesses, as follows:

The third precondition will be better fulfilled, if Leliesingel remains open for car traffic, and the measures proposed by the Working Group Traffic are implemented.³⁰⁰

In 1992, the municipality set about implementing various measures to prepare for the experimental closure. It introduced a speed limit of 30 km/h in Noorderplantsoenbuurt, and at the same time placed speed humps, or applied an entrance design in this neighbourhood. To prevent through traffic from the north from entering Noorderplantsoen, the municipality reconstructed the area around the eastern entrance to the park, through transforming the northern entranceway into a bicycle path and narrowing the roadway of Boteringesingel. It banned cars from Noorderstationsstraat from turning right into Boteringesingel. It also surfaced Prinsesseweg and Wilhelminakade with asphalt and built bicycle paths.

In November, Hasselaar presented the draft of the neighbourhood traffic plan for Noorderplantsoenbuurt, Oranjebuurt and Hortusbuurt (Figure 19). This draft proposes, based on the proposal by the Groen Links, closing not only Leliesingel but also Kruissingel to restrain through traffic. To maintain accessibility by car to the existing restaurant, the loop remains open in an anti-clockwise direction from Grote Kruisstraat. One-way traffic is introduced on Boteringesingel and Oranjesingel, while existing one-way traffic is reversed on many other roads to prevent through traffic. The draft also proposes a speed limit of 30 km/h in Oranjebuurt, accompanied with speed humps and an entrance design, like in Noorderplantsoenbuurt. That is why, much more thorough measures against through traffic were to be taken for Oranjebuurt than proposed in the Progress Report, although they were not always as residents demanded. Nevertheless, anxiety among residents there were not wiped out. They were afraid that, if this draft was implemented, many drivers could not find alternative routes and could "finish up in the neighbourhood". They particularly asked for "good signposts"³⁰¹.

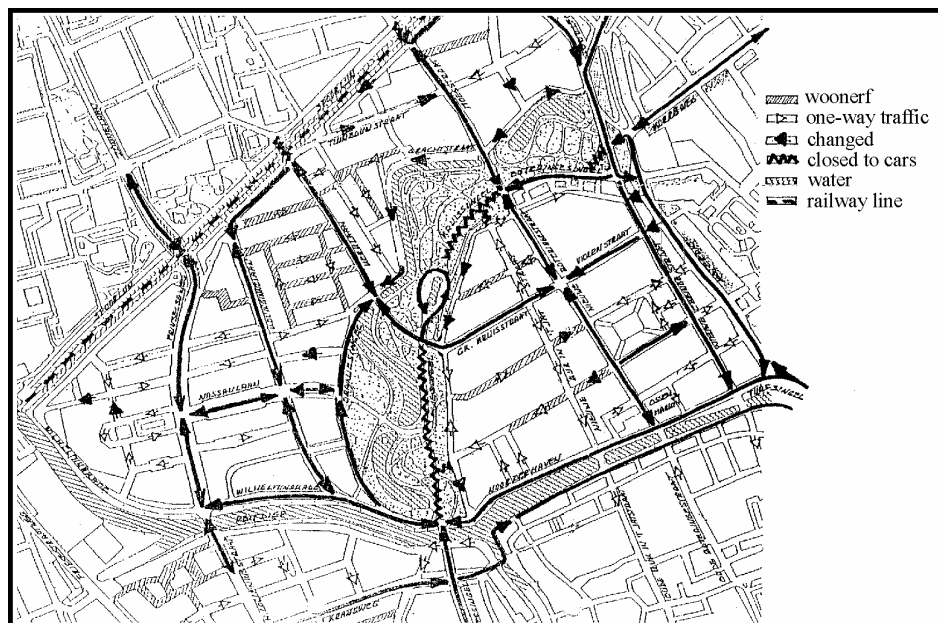


Figure 19: The new circulation in preparation for the closure

Early next year, in 1993, the municipal council approved this draft, and the B&W prepared a proposal to the municipal council to start the experiment in May. The B&W decided this proposal on February 23rd. The proposal refers to the "package of additional measures", which was listed in the Progress Report, and argues that, except for the reconstruction of Westerhaven³⁰², all those measures have already been implemented or are implemented before the experiment. Concerning signposts, those in a southerly direction have already been adjusted to the coming traffic situation, and those in a northerly direction will be adjusted sooner or later. That is why, the proposal concludes that "we are of the opinion that the experimental closure can be responsibly started". It also puts forward how to investigate the effects of the experimental closure. Among the four preconditions "to which the decision to close Leliesingel was linked in the past", the "recreational value" and "traffic safety" cannot be objectively evaluated, and "therefore the investigation is concentrated on two aspects: a shift in the flow of traffic and effects on accessibility to shopping concentrations", it suggests. The investigation will be conducted before the closure, "about 4 months" and "about 10 months" after the closure, that is, three times in total, and the consultancy firm, Hofstra Verkeersadviseurs, will conduct the investigation. The proposed schedule is as follows:

- March 1993: preliminary investigation
- April 1993: implementing the circulation plan in the adjacent neighbourhoods
- May 1993: starting the experimental closure
- September/ October 1993: the first investigation into effects
- March/ April 1994: the second investigation into effects
- summer 1994: the municipal council discussion on the final report

The experiment is to last until after the municipal council discusses the final report. In addition, it is suggested to establish a "small sounding board group" as a "contact point" during the experiment, which consists of three representatives from Hortusbuurt, Oranjebuurt and Noorderplantsoenbuurt, a representative of shopkeepers on Kerklaan, a representative of the KvK and some civil servants. This proposal did not arouse controversy within and without the municipal council, and was approved on March 24th, with only the VVD³⁰³ opposing.

Subsequently, a preliminary investigation was conducted in March and April, and thereafter a speed limit of 30 km/h in Oranjebuurt and one-way traffic was introduced based on the neighbourhood traffic plan. Finally, on June 2nd, the experimental closure started through placing power shovels at the entrances to the park on Leliesingel and Kruissingel.

9.3 The experiment

Immediately after the experiment started, again as in the case of the VCP, shopkeepers resumed an opposition campaign. First of all, shopkeepers on Kerklaan launched a campaign under the slogan, "I am furious", in June, that is, the same month as the experiment started. According to the Businesspeople's Club Kerklaan³⁰⁴, the development had been "disastrous" since the closure, and a decline in sales was as

much as "25 to 30 percent". Shopkeepers on Nieuwe Ebbingestraat also pressed for opening again Noorderplantsoen for cars. The shopkeepers' association conducted a questionnaire to all 80 shopkeepers there, and all of them answered that they were against closing the park. There were even shops that suffered from a decline "from 10 to 20 percent" in sales, the association argued. According to it, "shopkeepers have substantially misjudged the experimental closure":

We at first agreed with it because we thought that the effects of the closure would be better. It is now clearly not the case. As long as we are concerned, the experiment has failed, and Kruissingel and Leliesingel must be again made open for car traffic.

The shopkeepers' association on Korreweg pointed out "significantly less sales"³⁰⁵ among shops near the park. In addition, in December, when the Hofstra published the report³⁰⁶ on the interim investigation, these shopping streets, joined by Moesstraat, urged the municipality to "end as soon as possible"³⁰⁷ the experiment. According to the interim investigation, which was conducted in October, in comparison with the preliminary investigation, the "average sales per customer" declined by about 10 % on Kerklaan, and as much as about 40 % on Moesstraat, although the latter decline "was caused by seasonal influences of a particular type of business"³⁰⁸. In response to this result, the municipality commissioned the bureau KNOV Advies to investigate the effects of the closure on adjacent shopping streets.

On the other hand, residents lodged with the municipality complaints rather than objections against the closure. Particularly at the beginning of the experiment, many complaints were submitted that not a few drivers did not observe the newly introduced traffic restrictions. The municipality addressed this problem through placing "neighbourhood circulation boards" and "warning boards", or tightening controls by the police. More essentially, residents on some roads made complaints about an increase in through traffic. Particularly residents on both sides of Noorderhaven argued that traffic had dramatically increased since the closure, and, as a result, "Houses and embankments are damaged, while pedestrians and cyclists run great risks"³⁰⁹. They urged the municipality to narrow the road way, widen the side walks, introduce bike paths, and the like. Indeed, compared with the preliminary investigation, Noorderhaven southern side had seen a substantial increase in traffic from 2,950 per day to 7,250 in the interim investigation, and northern side also a large increase from 7,400 to 8,450. The report on the interim investigation, however, pointed out that the former remarkable increase had been mainly caused by the closure of Visserstraat and Hoekstraat to cars, which was implemented after the experimental closure of Noorderplantsoen started. Also concerning Herman Colleniusstraat and Prinsesseweg, residents asked for measures against increased traffic. Pupils of Nassauschool had to cross the latter, and the school argued that they were in danger.

Residents on Noorderhaven finally professed that, if the closure became definitive, they would not hesitate to bring a lawsuit, because the municipality promised only soundproofing, on the ground that the Diepenring, which Noorderhaven was a part of,

belonged to the main car structure. However, they turned out to be only residents who explicitly opposed closing the park in a somehow organised manner after the experiment. Residents of Oranjebuurt, who had been most anxious about the closure, were "very satisfied with the experimental closure"³¹⁰, and the chairman of the Working Group Traffic even said that "We support it at two hundred percent"³¹¹. So, at least such a monstrous alliance as in the case of the Plan Intermediate Step did not emerge, thanks to various measures taken against through traffic. After the municipality promised measures on Prinsesseweg, the director of Nassauschool also expressed his support for the closure.

However, as long as expressed opinions are concerned, negative ones were dominant. For example, according to the Nieuwsblad dated November 30th, 1993, "the experiment to make Noorderplantsoen car-free continues for several months, and now it is clear from neighbourhood meetings that particularly opponents of the closure express themselves". The sounding board group will talk to the municipality about the "registered problems". The article quotes the following remark by the chairman of the Neighbourhood Association Hortusbuurt³¹²:

There are also those who find it utterly nice that the park is closed and that we can now bicycle and walk there more comfortably. But we are mainly bombarded with negative reactions.

In addition, including this article, the newspapers reported overwhelmingly frequently negative reactions such as objections by shopkeepers and complaints from Noorderhaven. As a result of the decision to hold a referendum on the closure, which was the first local referendum in Groningen, the proponents of the closure could not leave such a one-sided situation.

The D66, which had joined the B&W since the last election, had consistently advocated the referendum. In November 1993, in the letter addressed to the B&W, the party asked for holding a referendum on the question whether Noorderplantsoen should remain closed to cars after the experiment. The CDA opposed this idea. Although the majority of the *wethouders* and councillors of the PvdA also opposed at first, the PvdA supported it finally, "when it became clear that, right before the local election, the D66 could benefit from the PvdA that was divided and obscure in this respect"³¹³. The municipal council on February 16th, 1994, approved with the support of the D66, PvdA and Groen Links the proposal by the B&W that the municipal council first should take the "basic decision"³¹⁴ on the closure, and subsequently a referendum should be held on October 5th. The details of the referendum were to be examined by the external Advice Committee chaired by J. Vis.

Almost at the same time as this decision, the following six neighbourhood organisations established the Neighbourhood Consultation Noorderplantsoen³¹⁵:

- Neighbourhood Association Noorderplantsoenbuurt
- Neighbourhood Organisation Kop Indische Buurt³¹⁶
- Neighbourhood Committee Bernoulliplein³¹⁷

- Neighbourhood Association A-kwartier³¹⁸
- District Council Schilderswijk³¹⁹
- Neighbourhood Group Hortus³²⁰

According to this federation, "In the middle of the noise around the closure, the voice of a large group of surrounding residents threatens to be lost"³²¹, and, as a result, "Many citizens and those from the region doubt if the closure is beneficial and responsible"³²². Therefore, the federation made posters reading "Plantsoen car-free, for a livable city", and "wants to bring especially the attention to the great natural, recreational and cultural-historical value of the park through all sorts of activities in the coming months"³²³. However, as seen in the above list of member organisations, the neighbourhood associations of Oranjebuurt and Hortusbuurt did not join this federation. It planned with the ENFB a "demonstrative bicycle ride by all those who support car-free Noorderplantsoen" from the park to Stadspark on May 28th. On that day, however, "only a handful of cyclists" came forward, and Hasselaar, who came by bicycle to give a starting shot, "stood somewhat at a loss". According to a member of the ENFB, this turned out to be a "failed action", because "we take no action for something that is already there"³²⁴.

9.4 The effects of the closure

In June, the Hofstra published the final report³²⁵, which included the result of the last investigation conducted in March. This report first analyses a change in traffic. According to the mechanical counting conducted three times, those roads that have experienced a large increase in traffic before and after the closure are the eastern and western ring roads and Nieuwe Ebbingestraat. Comparing the last counting with the preliminary counting, traffic has increased by 2,650 per day (9.6 %) on the eastern ring road, by 2,500 (11.5 %) on the western ring road and by 2,750 (90.2 %) on Nieuwe Ebbingestraat. Based on the fact that traffic through Noorderplantsoen was "about 9,000 to 9,500"³²⁶ before the closure, the report presumes that the two ring roads have accepted about 55 % of this traffic, and Nieuwe Ebbingestraat about 30%. This can be regarded as an achievement far beyond the expectation, because it had been argued that traffic reaching the neighbourhoods would be reduced by 50 %, and the ring roads would accept at most 21 % of existing traffic on Leliesingel. On the other hand, there are some roads within the adjacent neighbourhoods where traffic has increased. For example, traffic has increased by 1,350 (24.8 %) on Prinsesseweg (south) and by 700 (87.5 %) on Oranjesingel (south). The report, however, attributes these increases, not to the shift of through traffic, but to a change in the route choice of neighbourhood traffic³²⁷, which has been caused by the neighbourhood traffic plan introduced in advance of the closure. In terms of the absolute value, these increases are not problematic, it says. In addition, among those roads where residents had worried about an increase in traffic, Nassaulaan has seen a decline of 850 (25.0 %), and Oranjesingel a decline of 100 (4.4 %) in the north of Nassaulaan. Bicycle traffic through Noorderplantsoen was also counted three times at the same time as car traffic, and that on Leliesingel has increased by as many as 33.4 % (1,360) in the last counting

compared with the preliminary counting.

Successively, the report examines the effects on three shopping concentrations, that is, Kerklaan, Moesstraat and Wilhelminakade. The investigation was conducted again three times, through counting customers and using a questionnaire to them. According to the result, in terms of the "average number of customers per counted hour", Kerklaan and Moesstraat have seen "no negative effects". Customers in the preliminary and last counting are 276 and 270 respectively on Kerklaan, and 34 and 30 on Moesstraat. On Wilhelminakade, however, "negative effects can be signalled"³²⁸, with customers decreasing from 258 to 224. In terms of the "average spending per respondent to the questionnaire", in comparison with the preliminary investigation, Kerklaan has experienced an increase of 12.6 % in the last investigation, reversing the declining trend shown in the interim investigation, while Moesstraat has maintained the interim trend, resulting in a decline of 21.9 %, and Wilhelminakade has seen a decline of 13.1 %.

The question is to what extent these economic changes can be attributed to the closure. In relation to Kerklaan and Moesstraat, the report does not specifically mention this correlation. However, it analyses the "economic and geographical catchment area" of each shopping concentration, and points out the fact, based on the preliminary investigation, that 83.7 % of customers of shops on Kerklaan and Moesstraat lived in Oranjebuurt, Selwerd/ Paddepoel and Inner City North, and that 85.6 % of sales of these shops also originated from these three areas. The last investigation does not show any significant change in these percentages. In addition, concerning the "main reason to visit a shopping district", "close to work/ house" is most frequently mentioned by customers on both streets (56.4 % in the preliminary investigation and 57.8 % in the last investigation). On the contrary, those who mention "good accessibility" are very few (1.6 % and 0.8%). These findings indicate that the closure of Noorderplantsoen has had very little effect on these two shopping streets.

On the other hand, Wilhelminakade has the wider catchment area, which seems to have shrunk since the closure. For example, it attracted 13.6 % of customers from Oosterhoogebrug and its environs, Beijum and Lewenborg in the preliminary investigation, while it attracts 7.4 % from these areas in the last investigation. The report presumes that a decline in customers on Wilhelminakade has been "for the most part" caused by such a shrinkage in the catchment area. However, this shrinkage can be "only partly attributed to the experimental closure". According to the report, "An aspect that probably plays a more important role" is the renewal of the shopping centres of Paddepoel and Selwerd, which has been completed after the experiment. "Because these shopping centres have acquired more 'atmosphere', these centres attract more customers, at the expense of neighbourhood centres such as Wilhelminakade"³²⁹, it says.

Although it was at first argued that traffic safety could not be objectively evaluated, the report slightly mentions it. It presents the following table, which shows the number of accidents at intersections concerned quarterly in 1993. Based on this, it argues that "positive effects"³³⁰ of the closure can be recognised at the intersection of Boteringesingel and Nieuwe Ebbingestraat, while significant changes can not be recognised at others.

intersection	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
Herman Colleniusstraat -Prinsesseweg	0	0	0	0
Plantsoenbrug - Wilhelminakade	0	0	0	0
Nassaulaan - Prinsesseweg	0	0	1	1
Boteringesingel - Nieuwe Ebbingestraat	7	1	0	0
Noorderhaven northern side - Nieuwe Kijk in 't Jatstraat	1	1	2	0
Noorderhaven southern side - Oude Kijk in 't Jatstraat	1	2	0	0

(number of accidents quarterly in 1993)

Table 4: Traffic accidents at intersections

The report by the bureau KNOV Advies was also published in June. It mainly deals with the effects on Kerklaan and Moesstraat, and, unlike the report by the Hofstra, emphasises serious effects of the closure. That is, 85 % of businesses see the "negative effects" of the closure, and 45 % have suffered from an "extra loss of sales of more than five percent". Concerning 18 businesses (36 %), even "their continuation"³³¹ is threatened, the report points out. While admitting the effects of the renewal of the nearby shopping centres, it argues that the closure "must have strengthened the declining trend among these businesses"³³² and presses for opening again Noorderplantsoen for cars. It also suggests that parking spaces should be enlarged for these shopping streets, and the underpass of the railway line on Moesstraat, through which only pedestrians and bicycles can pass, should be made open for cars.

9.5 The proposal to close definitively

Receiving not only these reports but also the recommendations from the Advice Committee related to the referendum, the B&W prepared a proposal to the municipal council concerning the definitive closure of Noorderplantsoen. This B&W had been just reorganised after the local election in March 1994. At this election, the PvdA further lost one seat, resulting in 10, and the CDA also reduced seats from 6 to 4, while the D66 won 7 seats, increasing by one. These three parties maintained their coalition, but the CDA lost one post of *wethouder*. As a result, the B&W consisted of three PvdA *wethouders*, two D66 *wethouders* and one CDA *wethouder*, returning to the original six *wethouders* in total. The portfolio of traffic was successively taken by Hasselaar of the D66.

The proposal that the B&W prepared in June consists of two sections, that is, "A. THE CLOSURE" and "B. THE REFERENDUM". The former section, as usual, first lists the four preconditions, to which "the municipal council has linked the experimental closure", and states that the B&W examined the closure in terms of these preconditions. After reviewing the investigations by the Hofstra and KNOV Advies, at the beginning of "6. Consideration", it argues that "the experimental closure fulfils three of the four imposed preconditions". That is, the closure "does not lead to through traffic", and "has not led to more dangerous situations concerning traffic nor to an increase in social danger". In addition, although not investigated, "the recreational value of Noorderplantsoen has unmistakably increased", and the closure is also beneficial "from the ecological point of view". Successively, the proposal examines the remaining precondition, that is, "maintaining accessibility to shopping and business concentrations", which the KNOV Advies found to be undermined by the closure. First of all, it insists that all the negative economic trends cannot be attributed to the closure, mentioning other factors concerned, such as "the renovation of the shopping centres Paddepoel and Selwerd, (long term) development in retail business and the commercial policy of businesspeople". In addition, it refers to redevelopment projects that are already progressing on Wilhelminakade or Nieuwe Ebbingestraat, and, in relation to Kerklaan and Moesstraat, puts forward the following argument, which is essentially by no means new:

The function of Kerklaan as a neighbourhood centre makes accessibility for neighbourhoods at a longer distance less important. Now, almost 90 % of sales of the cluster Kerklaan/ Moesstraat come from Oranjebuurt and four adjacent neighbourhoods. That has not become less with the experimental closure. This means that, as long as Kerklaan and Moesstraat are concerned, there is certainly in the somewhat longer term no reason not to close Leliesingel and Kruissingel.

Concerning suggestions made by the KNOV Advies, it promises an effort at a "(limited) expansion of the parking possibilities", while it rejects the idea to open the underpass on Moesstraat for cars. The conclusion is that "Considering all, we propose proceeding to the definitive closure of Leliesingel and Kruissingel to motorised traffic". In addition, "In order to further strengthen the quietness and safety in the park, we propose applying the closure also to mopeds". The experiment continues until the referendum, and if the majority of voters is against the closure, the original situation will first return. The B&W, "when appropriate", will propose a new plan that ensures the safety of pedestrians and bicycles, admitting car traffic, the proposal states.

On the other hand, in "B. REFERENDUM", it proposes holding a referendum on the definitive closure with the following text addressed to the citizens:

The municipal council of Groningen decided to continuously close Leliesingel and a part of Kruissingel to motorised traffic and mopeds. You are asked to say whether or not you agree with this decision.

Yes, I agree with the decision by the municipal council to continuously close Leliesingel and a part of Kruissingel to motorised traffic and mopeds.

No, I do not agree with the decision by the municipal council to continuously close Leliesingel and

a part of Kruissingel to motorised traffic and mopeds.

It also proposes the threshold of the turnout, that is, 30,387 (21.5 %), which is one-third of the voters at the latest local election. If the turnout is short of this threshold, then the basic decision by the municipal council is implemented.

Because the CDA *wethouder* B. Westerink maintained his opposition against this proposal, it was proposed as the "majority proposal" by the B&W. The municipal council approved this on July 7th, with only the CDA and VVD opposing. After the summer vacation, in September, the municipality launched a campaign to urge the public to vote at the referendum. It held an exhibition concerning this referendum in the Municipal Information Centre until the day of the referendum, displayed posters in 31 places, circulated pamphlets and bought a full page of advertising space in the *Gezinsbode* (Figure 20). In addition, it organised a debate about the closure, which was aired by local television, the day before the referendum.



Figure 20: A call to vote at the referendum
(Source: *Gezinsbode*, October 3rd, 1994)

Contrasting with the active campaign by the municipality were the responses from those who supported and opposed the closure. Concerning the former, the five political parties, that is, PvdA, D66, Groen Links, SP and Student en Stad, started a joint campaign in September, calling for casting a "yes" vote in the referendum. They published a pamphlet with the title, "WE SAY YES". On the other hand, according to the *Nieuwsblad* dated September 20th, six business organisations, including the KvK

and KNOV, established the Working Group "For Accessible Groningen"³³³, and started a campaign to facilitate a "no" vote. They delivered about 1,500 posters to shops, and urged each shopping street to take action. However, dated September 30th, that is, less than one week before the referendum, the *Gezinsbode* reported, in disappointment, that "a fierce election dispute has been lacking" and "It is actually a dull show, without turbulent neighbourhood meetings and without fierce discussions between politicians in the local media". In fact, except for the above mentioned campaigns, the only action that had been reported since September was the "child referendum" for pupils at Nassauschool on September 30th, which the Neighbourhood Consultation Noorderplantsoen organised in cooperation with the school³³⁴.

Such an inactivity might be attributed to the fact that it was presumed that "yes" votes would overwhelm "no" votes at the referendum. The editorial in the *Gezinsbode*, after the referendum, recalled that, "in a city with many young residents, among whom many cyclists, people expected that a huge majority would opt for a car-free park"³³⁵. In fact, according to the questionnaire conducted by the Groen Links in the park on May 5th, during the Liberation Festival, 95 % of respondents³³⁶ supported the closure. The questionnaire by telephone, which the *Gezinsbode* and Nieuws TV conducted early in September, also revealed the substantial superiority of "yes" votes, with 49 % supporting and 32 % opposing the closure³³⁷.

9.6 The referendum

Because of such a prediction, the result of the referendum on October 5th was "remarkable". First of all, the turnout was 43,820 (30.1 %), and so the referendum was valid. Then, "yes" votes, that is, those who supported the definitive closure, were 22,417 (51.2 %), while "no" votes were 21,403 (48.8 %). That is why, "the proposal by the B&W to definitively make the park car-free pulled through by a very narrow margin"³³⁸. Car-free Noorderplantsoen had really finally, almost twenty years after the idea was put forward, become definitive.

The *Nieuwsblad* the next day reported the votes in each neighbourhood. According to this, in the "area directly adjacent" to the park, "yes" votes were 2,903 (63.0 %), while "no" votes 1,702 (37.0 %). So, here the percentage of those who supported the closure considerably exceeded the average in the city. On the other hand, in Lewenborg/Noorddijk, which is far from the park, the breakdown was reversed, with "yes" votes 841 (45.2 %) and "no" votes 1,018 (54.8 %). Moreover, in "relatively rich" Groningen-Zuid, "yes" votes were 2,332 (40.4 %) and "no" votes 3,442 (59.6 %), or in Corpus den Hoorn, "yes" votes 968 (40.4 %) and "no" votes 1,431 (59.6 %). That is why, those neighbourhoods whose residents used the park as a through traffic route more frequently than as a park voted more negatively against the closure. Citizens took, in a sense, a very understandable voting behaviour. Mayor H. Ouwerkerk commented on the result that "If the opponents had been more active, then they could have achieved still more"³³⁹.

10. Conclusion

As we have seen repeatedly, the demands concerning traffic of residents clearly conflict with those of businesspeople. The leaders of the PvdA in the 1970s tried to reveal this kind of conflicts, and make a choice, clearly standing by one side. The VCP was precisely the product of this attitude. In the 1980s, however, while the PvdA leaders rather tried to obscure these conflicts together with the business community, through, for example, using the word "inter-neighbourhood connections" instead of through traffic routes, and insisted on "equally weighing interests", in fact they started to pursue a traffic policy that took into account overwhelmingly the interests of the business community. Through the process, which originated from traffic planning for the northern neighbourhoods and culminated in the decision of the Plan Intermediate Step, measures against through traffic had been again and again delayed and watered down, and, as a result, the PvdA leaders had increasingly diverted from their own party framework. The only measure that survived through this process was the closure of Noorderplantsoen to cars.

Reviewing the history that had finally led to definitively closing the park, consistent demands within the PvdA for the car-free park, based on its election programs, and, as a result, the decision by the municipal council in January 1986 must have been decisively important in closing the park. Without these, Gietema would not have even prepared the Progress Report, or even the experiment would not have been stipulated in the *college* program 1990-1994. With the decision by the municipal council near at hand, the Nieuwsblad and Gezinsbode brought public attention to these people within the PvdA. The former described the closure of Noorderplantsoen as the "last spasm of the radical wing of the Groningen division of the PvdA"³⁴⁰. The Gezinsbode particularly referred to the "theme evening" organised by the VROV on March 5th, 1986. At this meeting attended by 19 party members "of 2,000 Groningen PvdA members at a rough estimate", "12 of 19!" supported the complete closure. "When the PvdA finds in **these** party members the motivation to push through such a controversial plan, the question arises who actually runs Groningen"³⁴¹, it points out. However, "radically" deviating from the party frame work were the PvdA leaders, and "12" party members just urged them to observe the election programs, based on which the electorate had voted. In relation to the argument for adhering to the election programs, business organisations asked the B&W to "place the well-being of the city above political interests and dogmas", and surrounding residents also, during the dispute about the Plan Intermediate Step, argued that "the safety of our children weighs heavier than any interests of party politics!", as seen earlier. The election program, however, ought to be an each political party's vision of how to achieve "the well-being of the city", and thanks to "party politics", if defined as politics that respects party frameworks, the closure of Noorderplantsoen, which surrounding residents at last supported "at two hundred percent", has been realised.

On the other hand, the following process after the decision by the municipal council could have thrown into the wastebasket the above mentioned, so to speak, product of party democracy. The closure had to go through the postponement by Gietema, the crushing defeat of the PvdA at the local election in 1990, for which the PvdA leaders' attitudes exemplified by Gietema might have been at least partly responsible, and, as a result, the experiment and referendum. After the experiment started, shopkeepers resumed their opposition campaigns, and the views on the economic effects remained split. Because of the voting behaviour based on the individual interests, the result of the referendum, the means for direct democracy, was far from decisive, rather reinforcing doubts about the validity of the closure.



Figure 21: The entrance to Noorderplantsoen

Notes

- 1 Gemeenteprogramma 78-82, 8
- 2 Gemeenteprogram 82-86, 24-25
- 3 TSUBOHARA, S. (2007), URSI-rapport 317 and TSUBOHARA, S. (2007), URSI-report 322
- 4 See TSUBOHARA, S. (2007), URSI-report 322
- 5 Nieuwsblad van het Noorden, October 17th, 1978
- 6 Discussienota Verkeer en Vervoer, 33
- 7 Reacties op Discussienota Verkeer en Vervoer, 223
- 8 The highest court of administrative litigation in the Netherlands
- 9 Nieuwsblad, March 3rd, 1980
- 10 *werkgroep verkeersonderzoek noordelijke stadswijken*
- 11 *Werkgroep Transportorganisaties*
- 12 *Stichting Winkelcentrum Paddepoel*
- 13 *Coöperatieve Vereniging Eigenaren in het Winkelcentrum De Paddepoel*
- 14 *Stichting Dienstverlening voor bejaarden*
- 15 *Wijkoverleg Vinkhuizen*
- 16 Nieuwsblad, March 10th, 1981
- 17 *ibid.*, March 24th, 1981
- 18 *ibid.*, March 10th, 1981
- 19 *ibid.*
- 20 *Dienst Stadsontwikkeling en Volkshuisvesting*
- 21 *Verkeersplan Noordelijke Stadswijken*
- 22 Tussenstap: Discussienota/ Bijlagen, 21
- 23 *Ibid.*
- 24 *Ibid.*, 22
- 25 *Ibid.*, 27
- 26 *Ibid.*
- 27 *Ibid.*, 28
- 28 *Ibid.*, 38
- 29 *Ibid.*, 28
- 30 All the pictures, except for Figure 5, were taken by the author in 2007.
- 31 *wijkontsluitingswegen*
- 32 Tussenstap: Discussienota/ Bijlagen, 24
- 33 Nieuwsblad, May 4th, 1983
- 34 *ibid.*
- 35 Tussenstap: Discussienota/ Bijlagen, 5
- 36 *ibid.*, 6
- 37 *ibid.*, 9
- 38 *ibid.*, 11-12
- 39 *ibid.*, 8
- 40 *ibid.*, 9
- 41 *ibid.*, 11
- 42 *nota Verkeersstructuur Groningen-Noord*
- 43 Tussenstap: Discussienota/ Bijlagen, 129
- 44 a letter dated May 22nd, 1984, by the B&W attached to Tussenstap: Discussienota
- 45 Tussenstap: Discussienota/ Bijlagen, 129-130
- 46 *ibid.*, 149

- 47 *ibid.*, 131
- 48 *ibid.*, 134-135
- 49 *ibid.*, 144-145
- 50 Nieuwsblad, February 15th, 1984
- 51 *bereikbaarheidsroute*
- 52 a letter dated May 22nd, 1984, by the B&W attached to Tussenstap: Discussienota
- 53 Tussenstap: Discussienota/ Tekstdeel, Ten Geleide
- 54 *verkeersleefbaarheid*
- 55 Tussenstap: Discussienota/ Tekstdeel, 6
- 56 *ibid.*, 9-11
- 57 see TSUBOHARA, S. (2007), URSI-rapport 317
- 58 Tussenstap: Discussienota/ Tekstdeel, 26
- 59 *ibid.*, 6-7
- 60 *ibid.*, 28-29
- 61 *ibid.*, 27-28
- 62 *ibid.*, 31
- 63 *ibid.*, 33-36
- 64 *ibid.*, 38
- 65 *ibid.*, 37
- 66 *ibid.*, 38
- 67 Nieuwsblad, September 25th, 1979
- 68 Tussenstap: Discussienota/ Tekstdeel, 44-45
- 69 *tussenverdeeling*
- 70 Tussenstap: Discussienota/ Tekstdeel, 45-46
- 71 *ibid.*, 47
- 72 *ibid.*, 48-50
- 73 *ibid.*, 57-62
- 74 see TSUBOHARA, S. (2006), URSI-rapport 315
- 75 *Bewonersvereniging Noorderplantsoenbuurt*
- 76 Tussenstap: Besluitvormingsnota/ Bijlage I, 9
- 77 *Ondernemersclub Nieuwe Ebbingestraat*
- 78 Tussenstap: Besluitvormingsnota/ Bijlage I/ Verslag Hoorzitting 13 juni 1984, bijlage 2
- 79 Tussenstap: Besluitvormingsnota/ Bijlage I, 7
- 80 remark by a representative of the Shopkeepers' Association Korreweg at the public hearing on June 5th, Tussenstap: Besluitvormingsnota/ Bijlage I/ Verslag Hoorzitting 5 juni 1984, 3
- 81 *Ondernemersvereniging Korreweg e.o.*
- 82 Tussenstap: Besluitvormingsnota/ Bijlage I, 13
- 83 *ibid.*
- 84 Tussenstap: Besluitvormingsnota/ Bijlage I/ Verslag Hoorzitting 13 juni 1984, bijlage 2
- 85 Tussenstap: Besluitvormingsnota/ Bijlage I, 7
- 86 Nieuwsblad, August 29th, 1984
- 87 Tussenstap: Besluitvormingsnota/ Bijlage I, 14-15
- 88 *Ibid.*, 22-23
- 89 *Ibid.*, 16
- 90 *Overlegorgaan Midden- en Kleinbedrijf*
- 91 Tussenstap: Besluitvormingsnota/ Bijlage I, 23
- 92 *Ondernemersoverleg Verkeersstructuur Groningen-noord*
- 93 Tussenstap: Besluitvormingsnota/ Bijlage I, 15
- 94 *Vervoersbonden FNV*

- 95 Reacties op Discussienota Verkeer en Vervoer, 239
- 96 *Dienstenbond FNV*
- 97 Tussenstap: Besluitvormingsnota/ Bijlage I, 17
- 98 *Dienstenbond CNV*
- 99 *Actiecomité Noordelijke Stadswijken*. In this case, the "Northern Neighbourhoods (*Noordelijke Stadswijken*)" means the "Groningen-north" in the Plan Intermediate Step. These two words are generally not strictly distinguished.
- 100 Nieuwsblad, August 29th, 1984
- 101 *ibid.*, August 30th, 1984
- 102 *ibid.*, September 6th, 1984
- 103 Strictly speaking, Oranjebuurt and Noorderplantsoenbuurt constitute Oranjewijk. However, the name "Oranjewijk" is often used, while actually meaning the area of Oranjebuurt. In this paper, to avoid confusion, the author changed "Oranjewijk" to "Oranjebuurt" when the former is clearly used for the latter.
- 104 Tussenstap: Besluitvormingsnota/ Bijlage I, 10
- 105 *Buurtvereniging Oranjebuurt*
- 106 *Verkeerswerkgroep Oranjebuurt*
- 107 *wegasverschuivingen*
- 108 Tussenstap: Besluitvormingsnota/ Bijlage I, 10
- 109 *ibid.*
- 110 *ibid.*, 11
- 111 *ibid.*, 8-9
- 112 *Gezamenlijke Ondernemers van de Kerklaan*
- 113 Tussenstap: Besluitvormingsnota/ Bijlage I, 9
- 114 *ibid.*, 8
- 115 *ibid.*
- 116 *Gezamenlijke Bewonersorganisaties Noordelijke Stadswijken*
- 117 Tussenstap: Besluitvormingsnota/ Bijlage I, 21
- 118 *ibid.*, 11
- 119 Nieuwsblad, September 5th, 1984
- 120 Tussenstap: Besluitvormingsnota/ Bijlage I, 21
- 121 *ibid.*, 1
- 122 *Wergroep Verkeer Beijum*
- 123 Tussenstap: Besluitvormingsnota/ Bijlage I, 12
- 124 Tussenstap: Besluitvormingsnota/ Bijlage I/ Verslag Hoorzitting 13 juni 1984, 1
- 125 *Bewonerscomité Bilitonplein*
- 126 Tussenstap: Besluitvormingsnota/ Bijlage I/ Verslag Hoorzitting 5 juni 1984, 5
- 127 Tussenstap: Besluitvormingsnota/ Bijlage I, 14
- 128 Nieuwsblad, August 30th, 1984
- 129 *binnenring*
- 130 Tussenstap: Besluitvormingsnota/ Bijlage I, 18-19
- 131 *ibid.*, 19
- 132 Tussenstap: Besluitvormingsnota/ Bijlage I, 20
- 133 *ibid.*
- 134 Nieuwsblad, June 6th, 1984
- 135 Tussenstap: Besluitvormingsnota/ Bijlage I, 17
- 136 Nieuwsblad, October 9th, 1984
- 137 To be precise, not yet VROV but *Wergroep Volkshuisvesting*, which had been called VROV since early 1985.
- 138 Kort Verslag Thema-Bijeenkomst "Nota Tussenstap", 26 Juni 1984

139 Onze Binding, March 1985
 140 Nieuwsblad, March 6th, 1985
 141 *Tussenvoorstel*
 142 Tussenstap: Besluitvormingsnota/ Bijlage III, (1)
 143 *ibid.*
 144 *pleinvariant*
 145 Tussenstap: Besluitvormingsnota/ Bijlage III, (1)
 146 *ibid.*, (4)
 147 Besluitvorming Nota Tussenstap, 1 juni 1985 (written by Zunderdorp)
 148 *interwijkverbindingen*
 149 Nieuwsblad, September 5th, 1984
 150 Besluitvorming Nota Tussenstap, 1 juni 1985 (written by Zunderdorp)
 151 Tussenstap: Besluitvormingsnota/ Bijlage III, (8)
 152 *ibid.*, (22)
 153 *ibid.*, (1)
 154 *ibid.*, (4)
 155 *ibid.*, (5)
 156 *ibid.*, (7)
 157 *ibid.*, (11)
 158 *ibid.*, (13)
 159 *ibid.*, (22)
 160 *ibid.*, (11)
 161 *ibid.*, (7)
 162 *ibid.*, (6)
 163 *ibid.*, (10)
 164 *ibid.*, (13)
 165 *ibid.*, (9)
 166 *ibid.*, (11)
 167 *ibid.*, (7)
 168 *wijkteams* of the PvdA. About how these worked in the 1970s, see TSUBOHARA, S. (2005), URSI Research Report 310
 169 Korte Reactie op het Voorlopige College-Besluit m.b.t. de Nota Tussenstap, 16/4/85 and Uitgebreide Reactie op het Voorlopige College-Besluit t.a.v. de Nota Tussenstap, 16/4/85
 170 He had been active in promoting car-free Noorderplantsoen in his neighbourhood, as seen before. He was employed by the municipal Department of Urban Planning in 1986, and thereafter involved in this issue as civil servant.
 171 *Secretarie-Afdeling Ruimtelijke Ordening*
 172 *omgekeerd effect*
 173 At the local election in 1982, the PvdA of Groningen actually won 15 seats.
 174 *circuitmodel*
 175 Tussenstap: Besluitvormingsnota/ Bijlage III, (6)
 176 Besluitvorming Nota Tussenstap, 1 juni 1985 (written by Zunderdorp)
 177 *Bewonerscomité Korrewegwijk*
 178 Tussenstap: Besluitvormingsnota/ Bijlage III, (12)
 179 Opmerkingen van de werkgroep VROV bij het voorstel van Rein (dd. 1/6/85) m.b.t. de nota Tussenstap
 180 Tussenstap: Besluitvormingsnota/ Bijlage III, (18)
 181 *schijnoplossing*
 182 Tussenstap: Besluitvormingsnota/ Bijlage III, (20)
 183 *ibid.*, (21)

184 *ibid.*, (16)
 185 Nieuwsblad, June 29th, 1985
 186 Tussenstap: Besluitvormingsnota/ Tekstdeel, 5-6
 187 *ibid.*, 3
 188 Concerning the meetings about the Compromise Proposal with the municipality, for example, the representative of KvK, Schilthuis, attended the meetings on March 15 (for the KvK), March 22nd (for Wilhelminakade), May 6th (for the Consultative Body Small and Medium-sized Business) and May 8th (for the KvK).
 189 *herverdelingseffect*
 190 *Secretarie-Afdeling Onderzoek en Statistiek*
 191 Tussenstap: Besluitvormingsnota/ Tekstdeel, 8-10
 192 *ibid.*, 10-12
 193 *ibid.*, 30
 194 *ibid.*, 12
 195 *ibid.*, 30
 196 *ibid.*, 12
 197 see TSUBOHARA, S. (2007), URSI-rapport 317
 198 Tussenstap: Besluitvormingsnota/ Tekstdeel, 19-21
 199 *ibid.*, 35-36
 200 *ibid.*, 15-16
 201 *ibid.*, 25
 202 *ibid.*, 24
 203 *ibid.*, 28
 204 *ibid.*, 33-34
 205 *ibid.*, 43
 206 *ibid.*, 47-62
 207 *ibid.*, 63-68
 208 *ibid.*, 75-76
 209 *ibid.*, 3
 210 *monsterverbond*
 211 Samenvatting gesprek over "Tussenstap"
 212 Groninger Gezinsbode, July 1st, 1985
 213 *ibid.*
 214 Nieuwsblad, August 28th, 1985
 215 All these opinions were quoted by the party group leader of the PvdA, P. Huisman, at the municipal council meeting on January 15th, 1986.
 216 *afdelingsbestuur* of the PvdA of Groningen
 217 Verslag Afdeling Bestuur 18/9/'85
 218 Nieuwsblad, September 24th, 1985
 219 *ibid.*, September 25th, 1985
 220 de Lawine, October 1st, 1985
 221 Nieuwsblad, October 2nd, 1985
 222 Gezinsbode, January 6th, 1986
 223 Another CDA *wethouder* A. Berger resigned during his term of office.
 224 Remark by N. Tromp (GPV) at the municipal council meeting on January 15th, 1986
 225 Nieuwsblad, January 6th, 1986
 226 *ibid.*
 227 *ibid.*, January 9th, 1986
 228 *Aktiecomitee Noorderplantsoen-Autovrij*
 229 This is turned out to be the only action taken by this committee that has been reported.

230 Remark by N. Tromp
 231 Remark by P. Wagenaar
 232 Remark by T. Pitstra
 233 Remark by J. Berends
 234 *hetze*
 235 This probably refers to the Onze Binding for June 1985, which reported the final proposal.
 236 Gezinsbode, April 4th, 1986
 237 Gemeenteprogram 1986-1990, 10
 238 Gezinsbode, March 12th, 1986
 239 *uitgangspunten*
 240 College-Program 1986-1990, 11
 241 *Dienst Ruimtelijke Ordening*
 242 Gezinsbode, April 28th, 1986
 243 Nieuwsblad, January 8th, 1986
 244 At this election, Barmentloo left the municipal council, and his portfolio of finance was succeeded by Zunderdorp, whose portfolio of traffic went to Gietema.
 245 Nieuwsblad, April 25th, 1986
 246 Nr. 9738 R.O., Onderwerp: Uitvoering Nota Tussenstap, 9 september 1986
 247 Verkeersonderzoek Noorderplantsoen, 3
 248 *Verkeersonderzoek Noorderplantsoen*
 249 Verkeersonderzoek Noorderplantsoen, 3
 250 *ibid.*, 4
 251 *ibid.*, 4-5
 252 *ibid.*, 6
 253 *ibid.*, 2
 254 *ibid.*
 255 The residents of Oranjebuurt, who later raised a serious objection about the similar report, Progress Report, did not respond to this report.
 256 Nieuwsblad, December 4th, 1987
 257 *ibid.*, July 17th, 1987
 258 *bovenwijkse functie*
 259 Voortgangsnotitie, 9-10
 260 Verslag Bijeenkomst Werkgroep VROV, 16 februari 1988
 261 Notitie t.b.v. de raadscommissie RO, Betreft: afsluiting Leliesingel voor autoverkeer
 262 correctly, January
 263 Van der Vondervoort had become a *wethouder* of education and culture since 1986, and Huisman had succeeded her as party group leader.
 264 *Plan van Aanpak voor de Binnenstad*
 265 *Nota Groningen Knooppunt van Verkeer en Vervoer*
 266 Nieuwsblad, November 10th, 1988
 267 Discussienota Groningen Knooppunt, 43-44
 268 Nieuwsblad, November 2nd, 1989, Remark by Rob van Vliet of the department
 269 *Voortgangsnotitie: Afsluiting Leliesingel, Opwaardering Noorderplantsoen*
 270 *randvoorwaarden*
 271 Voortgangsnotitie, 3
 272 *ibid.*, 4
 273 *ibid.*, 5-6
 274 *inritconstructie*, The entrances to residential blocks are narrowed or provided with obstacles such as speed humps, so that drivers have to slow down.

275 Voortgangsnotitie, 8
 276 *Commissie Goederenvervoer Provincie Groningen*
 277 Voortgangsnotitie, 9-10
 278 Vaststellingsnota Groningen Knooppunt/ Bijlage 2: Inspraakrapport, 5
 279 *ibid.*, 6
 280 *ibid.*, 7
 281 Voortgangsnotitie, 11
 282 *ibid.*, 12
 283 Nieuwsblad, February 2nd, 1990
 284 Verkiezingsprogramma 1990-1994, 11
 285 *aardverschuiving*
 286 The CPN of Groningen joined the Groen Links in January 1991, with its one seat.
 287 *proefafsluiting*
 288 Collegeprogram 1990-1994, 22
 289 *Het Alternatief?*
 290 *Het Alternatief?*, 15
 291 *ibid.*, 9
 292 *ibid.*, 15
 293 *Achteruitgangsnotitie*
 294 *Het Alternatief?*, 12
 295 *ibid.*, 8
 296 *ibid.*, 16
 297 According to this report, "very open asphalt concrete" (*zeer open asfalt beton*), which has a "noise-reducing character".
 298 *Het Alternatief?*, 18
 299 *ibid.*, 21
 300 *ibid.*, 13
 301 Nieuwsblad, December 9th, 1992
 302 A redevelopment project was being planned here.
 303 To be precise, the VVD and H. Wormgoor, who left the VVD in 1992, voted against the proposal.
 304 *Ondernemersclub Kerklaan*
 305 Gezinsbode, December 13th, 1993
 306 Hofstra Verkeersadviseurs BV, 2e interimrapportage
 307 Nieuwsblad, December 17th, 1993
 308 Hofstra Verkeersadviseurs BV, 2e interimrapportage, 6
 309 Nieuwsblad, January 17th, 1994
 310 Hofstra Verkeersadviseurs BV, 2e interimrapportage, 12
 311 Gezinsbode, November 17th, 1993
 312 *Buurtvereniging Hortusbuurt*
 313 Nieuwsblad, October 4th, 1994
 314 *principe-(raads)besluit*
 315 *Buurtenoverleg Noorderplantsoen*
 316 *Buurtorganisatie Kop Indische Buurt*
 317 *Buurtcomité Bernoulliplein*
 318 *Buurtvereniging A-kwartier*
 319 *Wijkraad Schilderswijk*
 320 *Buurtgroep Hortus*
 321 Nieuwsblad, February 18th, 1994
 322 Quotation from a brochure published by this federation

- 323 Nieuwsblad, February 18th, 1994
324 *ibid.*, May 30th, 1994
325 Hofstra Verkeersadviseurs BV, Eindconcept
326 *ibid.*, 8
327 *bestemmingsverkeer*
328 Hofstra Verkeersadviseurs BV, Eindconcept, 28
329 *ibid.*, 28-29
330 *ibid.*, 23
331 Nieuwsblad, June 16th, 1994
332 Quotation from the proposal to the municipal council that was introduced on July 7th, 1994
333 *Werkgroep 'Voor een bereikbaar Groningen'*
334 Among 77 voters (pupils), 68 voted for the closure.
335 Gezinsbode, October 7th, 1994
336 In total, 538 responded.
337 In total, 121 responded. The remaining 19% was "no opinion yet". Based on such a presumption, the Neighbourhood Association Noorderplantsoenbuurt supported holding the referendum, while residents on Noorderhaven were critical about it.
338 Gezinsbode, October 7th, 1994
339 *ibid.*
340 Nieuwsblad, January 8th, 1986
341 Gezinsbode, January 13th, 1986

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About the author

Education: Graduated from the Department of Urban Engineering, University of Tokyo in 1988.

Graduated from the Graduate School of Engineering, University of Tokyo in 1990.

Graduated from the Graduate School of Science and Technology, Kobe University in 1995, receiving a Doctor of Engineering.

Studying in the PhD course at the Faculty of Spatial Sciences, University of Groningen, since April 2005.

Occupation: Joined Tsu City College as instructor in April 1996 and promoted to associate professor in April 1997.

Transferred to Prefectural University of Kumamoto as associate professor in April 1999, serving in that position until March 2005.

Address: Faculty of Spatial Sciences

University of Groningen

Zernikecomplex

Landleven5

Postbus 800

9700 AV Groningen

The Netherlands

E-mail: s.tsubohara@rug.nl

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